I am a heritage because I bring you years of thought and the lore of time — I impart yet I can not speak — I have traveled among the peoples of the earth — I am a rover — Oft-times I stray from the fireside of the one who loves and cherishes me - who misses me when I am gone — Should you find me vagrant please send me home - among my brothers - on the book shelves of .....

ALFRED SANTELL

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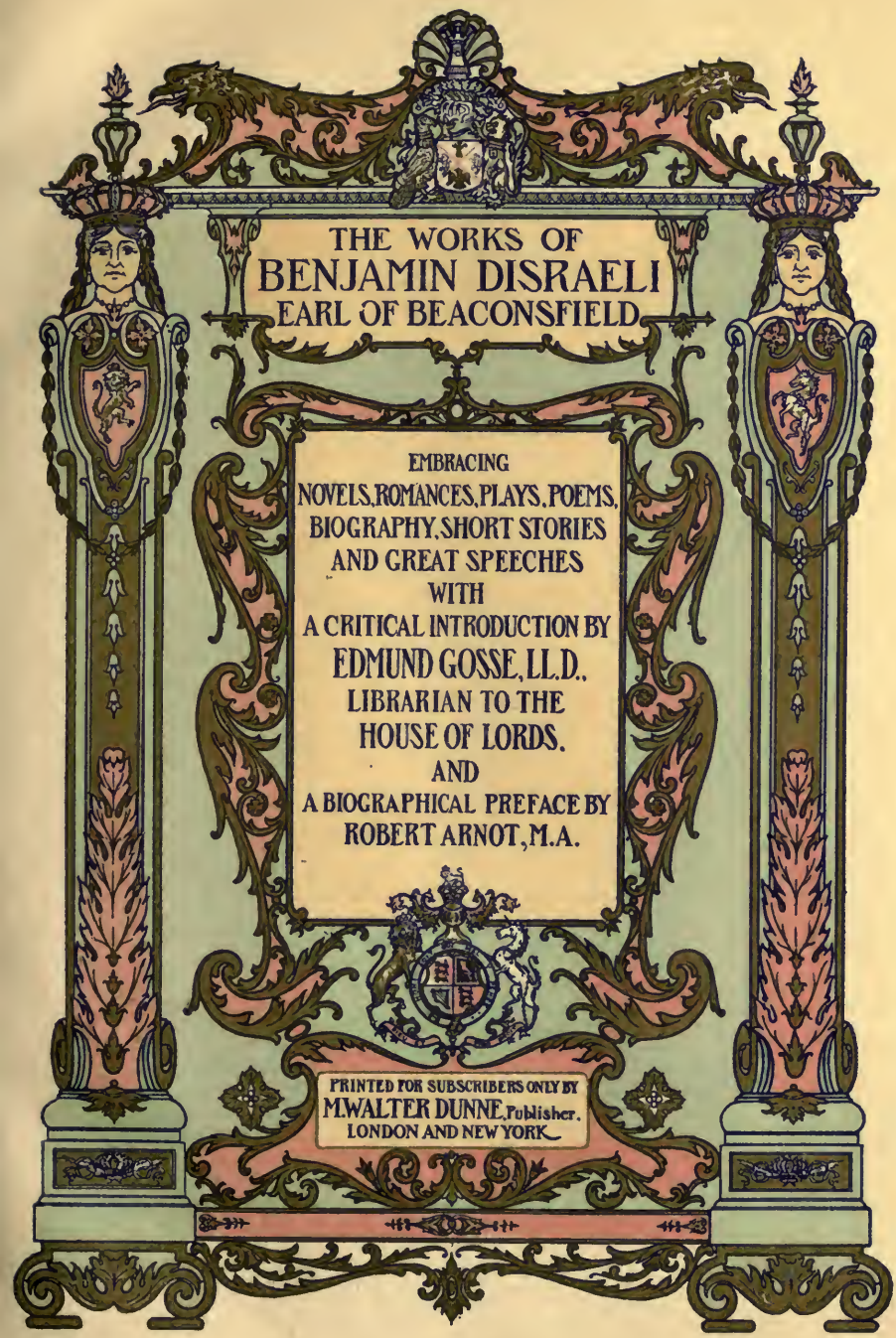
THE WORKS OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD
EMBRACING
NOVELS, ROMANCES, PLAYS, POEMS,
BIOGRAPHY, SHORT STORIES
AND GREAT SPEECHES
WITH
A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION BY
EDMUND GOSSE, LL.D.,
LIBRARIAN TO THE
HOUSE OF LORDS.
AND
A BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE BY
ROBERT ARNOT, M.A.
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THE YOUNG DUKE

"A MORAL TALE THOUGH GAY"

BY

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS.

Juno stood motionless, pale, and astounded.

(See page 28, *Ixion in Heaven.*)

VOLUME II

M. WALTER DUNNE
NEW YORK AND LONDON

THE YOUNG DUKE

"A MORAL TALE, THOUGH GAY"

BY

BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

VOLUME II.

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'MY NAME, GREAT HUNNIADES, IS PERHAPS NOT ALTOGETHER UNKNOWN TO YOU; THEY CALL ME ISKANDER.' (*The Rise of Iskander*) . . . 21

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CHAPTER VII.

'To See Ourselves as Others See Us.'

NOTHING was talked of in Yorkshire but Mr. Arundel Dacre's speech. All the world flocked to Castle Dacre to compliment and to congratulate; and an universal hope was expressed that he might come in for the county, if indeed the success of his eloquence did not enable his uncle to pre-occupy that honour. Even the calm Mr. Dacre shared the general elation, and told the Duke of St. James regularly every day that it was all owing to him. May Dacre was enthusiastic; but her gratitude to him was synonymous with her love for Arundel, and valued accordingly. The Duke, however, felt that he had acted at once magnanimously, generously, and wisely. The consciousness of a noble action is itself ennobling. His spirit expanded with the exciting effects which his conduct had produced; and he felt consolation under all his misery from the conviction that he had now claims to be remembered, and perhaps regarded, when he was no more among them.

The Bill went swimmingly through the Commons, the majority of two gradually swelling into eleven; and the important night in the Lords was at hand.

'Lord Faulconcourt writes,' said Mr. Dacre, 'that they expect only thirty-eight against us.'

'Ah! that terrible House of Lords!' said Miss Dacre. 'Let us see: when does it come on, the day after to-morrow? Scarcely forty-eight hours and all will be over, and we shall be just where we were. You and your friends manage very badly in your House,' she added, addressing herself to the Duke.

'I do all I can,' said his Grace, smiling. 'Burlington has my proxy.'

'That is exactly what I complain of. On such an occasion, there should be no proxies. Personal attendance would indicate a keener interest in the result. Ah! if I were Duke of St. James for one night!'

'Ah! that you would be Duchess of St. James!' thought the Duke; but a despairing lover has no heart for jokes, and so he did not give utterance to the wish. He felt a little agitated, and caught May Dacre's eye. She smiled, and slightly blushed, as if she felt the awkwardness of her remark, though too late.

The Duke retired early, but not to sleep. His mind was busied on a great deed. It was past midnight before he could compose his agitated feelings to repose, and by five o'clock he was again up. He dressed himself, and then put on a rough travelling coat, which, with a shawl, effectually disguised his person; and putting in one pocket a shirt, and in the other a few articles from his dressing-case, the Duke of St. James stole out of Castle Dacre, leaving a note for his host, accounting for his sudden departure by urgent business at Hauteville, and promising a return in a day or two.

The fresh morn had fully broke. He took his

hurried way through the long dewy grass, and, crossing the Park, gained the road, which, however, was not the high one. He had yet another hour's rapid walk, before he could reach his point of destination; and when that was accomplished, he found himself at a small public-house, bearing for a sign his own arms, and situated in the high road opposite his own Park. He was confident that his person was unknown to the host, or to any of the early idlers who were lingering about the mail, then breakfasting.

'Any room, guard, to London?'

'Room inside, sir: just going off.'

The door was opened, and the Duke of St. James took his seat in the Edinburgh and York Mail. He had two companions: the first, because apparently the most important, was a hard-featured, grey-headed gentleman, with a somewhat supercilious look, and a mingled air of acuteness and conceit; the other was a humble-looking widow in her weeds, middle-aged, and sad. These persons had recently roused themselves from their nocturnal slumbers, and now, after their welcome meal and hurried toilet, looked as fresh as birds.

'Well! now we are off,' said the gentleman. 'Very neat, cleanly little house this, ma'am,' continued he to his companion. 'What is the sign?' 'The Hauteville Arms.' 'Oh! Hauteville; that is—that is, let me see! the St. James family. Ah! a pretty fool that young man has made of himself, by all accounts. Eh! sir?'

'I have reason to believe so,' said the Duke.

'I suppose this is his park, eh? Hem! going to London, sir?'

'I am.'

'Ah! hem! Hauteville Park, I suppose, this. Fine ground wasted. What the use of parks is, I can't say.'

'The place seems well kept up,' said the widow.

'So much the worse; I wish it were in ruins.'

'Well, for my part,' continued the widow in a low voice, 'I think a park nearly the most beautiful thing we have. Foreigners, you know, sir——'

'Ah! I know what you are going to say,' observed the gentleman in a curt, gruffish voice. 'It is all nonsense. Foreigners are fools. Don't talk to me of beauty; a mere word. What is the use of all this? It produces about as much benefit to society as its owner does.'

'And do you think his existence, then, perfectly useless?' asked the Duke.

'To be sure, I do. So the world will, some day or other. We are opening our eyes fast. Men begin to ask themselves what the use of an aristocracy is. That is the test, sir.'

'I think it not very difficult to demonstrate the use of an aristocracy,' mildly observed the Duke.

'Pooh! nonsense, sir! I know what you are going to say; but we have got beyond all that. Have you read this, sir? This article on the aristocracy in "The Screw and Lever Review?"'

'I have not, sir.'

'Then I advise you to make yourself master of it, and you will talk no more of the aristocracy. A few more articles like this, and a few more noblemen like the man who has got this park, and people will open their eyes at last.'

'I should think,' said his Grace, 'that the follies of the man who had got this park have been pro-

ductive of evil only to himself. In fact, sir, according to your own system, a prodigal noble seems to be a very desirable member of the commonwealth and a complete leveller.'

'We shall get rid of them all soon, sir,' said his companion, with a malignant smile.

'I have heard that he is very young, sir,' remarked the widow.

'What is that to you or me?'

'Ah! youth is a trying time. Let us hope the best! He may turn out well yet, poor soul!'

'I hope not. Don't talk to me of poor souls. There is a poor soul,' said the utilitarian, pointing to an old man breaking stones on the highway. 'That is what I call a poor soul, not a young prodigal, whose life has been one long career of infamous debauchery.'

'You appear to have heard much of this young nobleman,' said the Duke; 'but it does not follow, sir, that you have heard truth.'

'Very true, sir,' said the widow. 'The world is very foul-mouthed. Let us hope he is not so very bad.'

'I tell you what, my friends; you know nothing about what you are talking of. I don't speak without foundation. You have not the least idea, sir, how this fellow has lived. Now, what I am going to tell you is a fact: I know it to be a fact. A very intimate friend of mine, who knows a person, who is a very intimate friend of an intimate friend of a person, who knows the Duke of St. James, told me himself, that one night they had for supper—what do you think ma'am?—Venison cutlets, each served up in a hundred pound note!'

'Mercy!' exclaimed the widow.

'And do you believe it?' asked the Duke.

'Believe it! I know it!'

'He is very young,' said the widow. 'Youth is a very trying time.'

'Nothing to do with his youth. It's the system, the infernal system. If that man had to work for his bread, like everybody else, do you think he would dine off bank notes? No! to be sure he wouldn't! It's the system.'

'Young people are very wild!' said the widow.

'Pooh! ma'am. Nonsense! Don't talk cant. If a man be properly educated, he is as capable at one-and-twenty of managing anything, as at any time in his life; more capable. Look at the men who write "The Screw and Lever;" the first men in the country. Look at them. Not one of age. Look at the man who wrote this article on the aristocracy: young Duncan Macmorrogh. Look at him, I say, the first man in the country by far.'

'I never heard his name before,' calmly observed the Duke.

'Not heard his name? Not heard of young Duncan Macmorrogh, the first man of the day, by far; not heard of him? Go and ask the Marquess of Sheepshead what he thinks of him. Go and ask Lord Two and Two what he thinks of him. Duncan dines with Lord Two and Two every week.'

The Duke smiled, and his companion proceeded.

'Well, again, look at his friends. There is young First Principles. What a head that fellow has got! Here, this article on India is by him. He'll knock up their Charter. He is a clerk in the India House. Up to the detail, you see. Let me read you this pas-

sage on monopolies. Then there is young Tribonian Quirk. By G—, what a mind that fellow has got! By G—, nothing but first principles will go down with these fellows! They laugh at anything else. By G—, sir, they look upon the administration of the present day as a parcel of sucking babes! When I was last in town, Quirk told me that he would not give that for all the public men that ever existed! He is keeping his terms at Gray's Inn. This article on a new Code is by him. Shows as plain as light, that, by sticking close to first principles, the laws of the country might be carried in every man's waistcoat pocket.'

The coach stopped, and a colloquy ensued.

'Any room to Selby?'

'Outside or in?'

'Out, to be sure.'

'Room inside only.'

'Well! in then.'

The door opened, and a singularly quaint-looking personage presented himself. He was very stiff and prim in his appearance; dressed in a blue coat and scarlet waistcoat, with a rich bandanna handkerchief tied very neatly round his neck, and a very new hat, to which his head seemed little habituated.

'Sorry to disturb you, ladies and gentlemen: not exactly the proper place for me. Don't be alarmed. I'm always respectful wherever I am. My rule through life is to be respectful.'

'Well, now, in with you,' said the guard.

'Be respectful, my friend, and don't talk so to an old soldier who has served his king and his country.'

Off they went,

'Majesty's service?' asked the stranger of the Duke.

'I have not that honour.'

'Hum! Lawyer, perhaps?'

'Not a lawyer.'

'Hum! A gentleman, I suppose?'

The Duke was silent; and so the stranger addressed himself to the anti-aristocrat, who seemed vastly annoyed by the intrusion of so low a personage.

'Going to London, sir?'

'I tell you what, my friend, at once; I never answer impertinent questions.'

'No offence, I hope, sir! Sorry to offend. I'm always respectful. Madam! I hope I don't inconvenience you; I should be sorry to do that. We sailors, you know, are always ready to accommodate the ladies.'

'Sailor!' exclaimed the acute utilitarian, his curiosity stifling his hauteur. 'Why! just now, I thought you were a soldier.'

'Well! so I am.'

'Well, my friend, you are a conjuror then.'

'No, I ayn't; I'm a marine.'

'A very useless person, then.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean to say, that if the sailors were properly educated, such an amphibious corps would never have been formed, and some of the most atrocious sinecures ever tolerated would consequently not have existed.'

'Sinecures! I never heard of him. I served under Lord Combermere. Maybe you have heard of him, ma'am? A nice man; a beautiful man. I have seen him stand in a field like that, with the shot falling

about him like hail, and caring no more for them than peas.'

'If that were for bravado,' said the utilitarian, 'I think it a very silly thing.'

'Bravado! I never heard of him. It was for his king and country.'

'Was it in India?' asked the widow.

'In a manner, ma'am,' said the marine, very courteously. 'At Bhurtpore, up by Pershy, and thereabouts; the lake of Cashmere, where all the shawls come from. Maybe you have heard of Cashmere, ma'am?'

"'Who has not heard of the vale of Cashmere!'" hummed the Duke to himself.

'Ah! I thought so,' said the marine; 'all people know much the same; for some have seen, and some have read. I can't read, but I have served my king and country for five-and-twenty years, and I have used my eyes.'

'Better than reading,' said the Duke, humouring the character.

'I'll tell you what,' said the marine, with a knowing look. 'I suspect there is a d—d lot of lies in your books. I landed in England last seventh of June, and went to see St. Paul's. "This is the greatest building in the world," says the man. Thinks I, "You lie." I did not tell him so, because I am always respectful. I tell you what, sir; maybe you think St. Paul's the greatest building in the world, but I tell you what, it's a lie. I have seen one greater. Maybe, ma'am, you think I am telling you a lie too; but I am not. Go and ask Captain Jones, of the 58th. I went with him: I give you his name: go and ask Captain Jones, of the 58th, if I be telling

you a lie. The building I mean is the palace of the Sultan Acber; for I have served my king and country five-and-twenty years last seventh of June, and have seen strange things; all built of precious stones, ma'am. What do you think of that? All built of precious stones; carnelian, of which you make your seals; as sure as I'm a sinner saved. If I ayn't speaking the truth, I am not going to Selby. Maybe you'd like to know why I am going to Selby? I'll tell you what. Five-and-twenty years have I served my king and country last seventh of June. Now I begin with the beginning. I ran away from home when I was eighteen, you see! and, after the siege of Bhurtpore, I was sitting on a bale of silk alone, and I said to myself, I'll go and see my mother. Sure as I am going to Selby, that's the whole. I landed in England last seventh of June, absent five-and-twenty years, serving my king and country. I sent them a letter last night. I put it in the post myself. Maybe I shall be there before my letter now.'

'To be sure you will,' said the utilitarian; 'what made you do such a silly thing? Why, your letter is in this coach.'

'Well! I shouldn't wonder. I shall be there before my letter now. All nonsense, letters: my wife wrote it at Falmouth.'

'You are married, then?' said the widow.

'Ayn't I, though? The sweetest cretur, madam, though I say it before you, that ever lived.'

'Why did you not bring your wife with you?' asked the widow.

'And wouldn't I be very glad to? but she wouldn't come among strangers at once; and so I have got a letter, which she wrote for me, to put in the post, in

case they are glad to see me, and then she will come on.'

'And you, I suppose, are not sorry to have a holiday?' said the Duke.

'Ayn't I, though? Ayn't I as low about leaving her as ever I was in my life; and so is the poor cretur. She won't eat a bit of victuals till I come back, I'll be sworn; not a bit, I'll be bound to say that; and myself, although I am an old soldier and served my king and country for five-and-twenty years, and so got knocked about, and used to anything, as it were, I don't know how it is, but I always feel queer whenever I am away from her. I shan't make a hearty meal till I see her. Somehow or other, when I am away from her, everything feels dry in the throat.'

'You are very fond of her, I see,' said the Duke.

'And ought I not to be? Didn't I ask her three times before she said *yes?* Those are the wives for wear, sir. None of the fruit that falls at a shaking for me! Hasn't she stuck by me in every climate, and in every land I was in? Not a fellow in the company had such a wife. Wouldn't I throw myself off this coach this moment, to give her a moment's peace? That I would, though; d—— me if I wouldn't.'

'Hush! hush!' said the widow; 'never swear. I am afraid you talk too much of your love,' she added, with a faint smile.

'Ah! you don't know my wife, ma'am. Are you married, sir?'

'I have not that happiness,' said the Duke.

'Well, there is nothing like it! but don't take the fruit that falls at a shake. But this, I suppose, is Selby?'

The marine took his departure, having stayed long enough to raise in the young Duke's mind curious feelings.

As he was plunged into reverie, and as the widow was silent, conversation was not resumed until the coach stopped for dinner.

'We stop here half-an-hour, gentlemen,' said the guard. 'Mrs. Burnet,' he continued, to the widow, 'let me hand you out.'

They entered the parlour of the inn. The Duke, who was ignorant of the etiquette of the road, did not proceed to the discharge of his duties, as the youngest guest, with all the promptness desired by his fellow-travellers.

'Now, sir,' said an outside, 'I will thank you for a slice of that mutton, and will join you, if you have no objection in a bottle of sherry.'

'What you please, sir. May I have the pleasure of helping you, ma'am?'

After dinner the Duke took advantage of a vacant outside place.

Tom Rawlins was the model of a guard. Young, robust, and gay, he had a letter, a word, or a wink for all he met. All seasons were the same to him; night or day he was ever awake, and ever alive to all the interest of the road; now joining in conversation with a passenger, shrewd, sensible, and respectful; now exchanging a little elegant badinage with the coachman; now bowing to a pretty girl; now quizzing a passer-by; he was off and on his seat in an instant, and, in the whiff of his cigar, would lock a wheel, or unlock a passenger.

From him the young Duke learned that his fellow-inside was Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh, senior, a writer

at Edinburgh, and, of course, the father of the first man of the day. Tom Rawlins could not tell his Grace as much about the principal writer in 'The Screw and Lever Review' as we can; for Tom was no patron of our periodical literature, farther than a police report in the Publican's Journal. Young Duncan Macmorrogh was a limb of the law, who had just brought himself into notice by a series of articles in 'The Screw and Lever,' in which he had subjected the universe piecemeal to his critical analysis. Duncan Macmorrogh cut up the creation, and got a name. His attack upon mountains was most violent, and proved, by its personality, that he had come from the Lowlands. He demonstrated the inutility of all elevation, and declared that the Andes were the aristocracy of the globe. Rivers he rather patronised; but flowers he quite pulled to pieces, and proved them to be the most useless of existences. Duncan Macmorrogh informed us that we were quite wrong in supposing ourselves to be the miracle of creation. On the contrary, he avowed that already there were various pieces of machinery of far more importance than man; and he had no doubt, in time, that a superior race would arise, got by a steam-engine on a spinning-jenny.

The other 'inside' was the widow of a former curate of a Northumbrian village. Some friend had obtained for her only child a clerkship in a public office, and for some time this idol of her heart had gone on prospering; but unfortunately, of late, Charles Burnet had got into a bad set, was now involved in a terrible scrape, and, as Tom Rawlins feared, must lose his situation and go to ruin.

'She was half distracted when she heard it first,

poor creature! I have known her all my life, sir. Many the kind word and glass of ale I have had at her house, and that's what makes me feel for her, you see. I do what I can to make the journey easy to her, for it is a pull at her years. God bless her! there is not a better body in this world; that I will say for her. When I was a boy, I used to be the playfellow in a manner with Charley Burnet: a gay lad, sir, as ever you'd wish to see in a summer's day, and the devil among the girls always, and that's been the ruin of him; and as open-a-hearted fellow as ever lived. D—— me! I'd walk to the land's end to save him, if it were only for his mother's sake, to say nothing of himself.'

'And can nothing be done?' asked the Duke.

'Why, you see, he is back in £ *s. d.*; and, to make it up, the poor body must sell her all, and he won't let her do it, and wrote a letter like a prince (No room, sir), as fine a letter as ever you read (Hilloa, there! What! are you asleep?)—as ever you read on a summer's day. I didn't see it, but my mother told me it was as good as e'er a one of the old gentleman's sermons. "Mother," said he, "my sins be upon my own head. I can bear disgrace (How do, Mr. Wilkins?), but I cannot bear to see you a beggar!"'

'Poor fellow!'

'Ay! sir, as good-a-hearted fellow as ever you'd wish to meet!'

'Is he involved to a great extent, think you?'

'Oh! a long figure, sir (I say, Betty, I've got a letter for you from your sweetheart), a very long figure, sir (Here, take it!); I should be sorry (Don't blush; no message?)—I should be sorry to take two

hundred pounds to pay it. No, I wouldn't take two hundred pounds, that I wouldn't (I say, Jacob, stop at old Bag Smith's).'

Night came on, and the Duke resumed his inside place. Mr. Macmorrogh went to sleep over his son's article; and the Duke feigned slumber, though he was only indulging in reverie. He opened his eyes, and a light, which they passed, revealed the countenance of the widow. Tears were stealing down her face.

'I have no mother; I have no one to weep for me,' thought the Duke; 'and yet, if I had been in this youth's station, my career probably would have been as fatal. Let me assist her. Alas! how I have misused my power, when, even to do this slight deed, I am obliged to hesitate, and consider whether it be practicable.'

The coach again stopped for a quarter of an hour. The Duke had, in consideration of the indefinite period of his visit, supplied himself amply with money on repairing to Dacre. Besides his purse, which was well stored for the road, he had somewhat more than three hundred pounds in his notebook. He took advantage of their tarrying, to inclose it and its contents in a sheet of paper with these lines:

'An unknown friend requests Mrs. Burnet to accept this token of his sympathy with suffering virtue.'

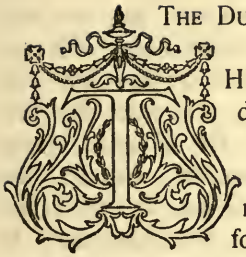
Determined to find some means to put this in her possession before their parting, he resumed his place. The Scotchman now prepared for his night's repose. He produced a pillow for his back, a bag for his feet, and a cap for his head. These, and a glass of brandy-and-water, in time produced a due effect, and

he was soon fast asleep. Even to the widow, night brought some solace. The Duke alone found no repose. Unused to travelling in public conveyances at night, and unprovided with any of the ingenious expedients of a mail coach adventurer, he felt all the inconveniences of an inexperienced traveller. The seat was unendurably hard, his back ached, his head whirled, the confounded sherry, slight as was his portion, had made him feverish, and he felt at once excited and exhausted. He was sad, too; very depressed. Alone, and no longer surrounded with that splendour which had hitherto made solitude precious, life seemed stripped of all its ennobling spirit. His energy vanished. He repented his rashness; and the impulse of the previous night, which had gathered fresh power from the dewy moon, vanished. He felt alone, and without a friend, and night passed without a moment's slumber, watching the driving clouds.

The last fifteen miles seemed longer than the whole journey. At St. Alban's he got out, took a cup of coffee with Tom Rawlins, and, although the morning was raw, again seated himself by his side. In the first gloomy little suburb Mrs. Burnet got out. The Duke sent Rawlins after her with the parcel, with peremptory instructions to leave it. He watched the widow protesting it was not hers, his faithful emissary appealing to the direction, and with delight he observed it left in her hands. They rattled into London, stopped in Lombard Street, reached Holborn, entered an archway; the coachman threw the whip and reins from his now careless hands. The Duke bade farewell to Tom Rawlins, and was shown to a bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Duke Makes a Speech.



HE return of morning had in some degree dissipated the gloom that had settled on the young Duke during the night. Sound and light made him feel less forlorn, and for a moment his soul again responded to his high purpose. But now he was to seek necessary repose. In vain. His heated frame and anxious mind were alike restless. He turned, he tossed in his bed, but he could not banish from his ear the whirling sound of his late conveyance, the snore of Mr. Macmorrogh, and the voice of Tom Rawlins. He kept dwelling on every petty incident of his journey, and repeating in his mind every petty saying. His determination to slumber made him even less sleepy. Conscious that repose was absolutely necessary to the performance of his task, and dreading that the boon was now unattainable, he became each moment more feverish and more nervous; a crowd of half-formed ideas and images flitted over his heated brain. Failure, misery, May Dacre, Tom Rawlins, boiled beef, Mrs. Burnet, the aristocracy, mountains and the marine, and the tower of St. Alban's cathedral, hurried along in in-

finite confusion. But there is nothing like experience. In a state of distraction, he remembered the hopeless but refreshing sleep he had gained after his fatal adventure at Brighton. He jumped out of bed, and threw himself on the floor, and in a few minutes, from the same cause, his excited senses subsided into slumber.

He awoke; the sun was shining through his rough shutter. It was noon. He jumped up, rang the bell, and asked for a bath. The chambermaid did not seem exactly to comprehend his meaning, but said she would speak to the waiter. He was the first gentleman who ever had asked for a bath at the Dragon with Two Tails. The waiter informed him that he might get a bath, he believed, at the Hummums. The Duke dressed, and to the Hummums he then took his way. As he was leaving the yard, he was followed by an ostler, who, in a voice musically hoarse, thus addressed him:

'Have you seen missis, sir?'

'Do you mean me? No, I have not seen your missis;' and the Duke proceeded.

'Sir, sir,' said the ostler, running after him, 'I think you said you had not seen missis?'

'You think right,' said the Duke, astonished; and again he walked on.

'Sir, sir,' said the pursuing ostler, 'I don't think you have got any luggage?'

'Oh! I beg your pardon,' said the Duke; 'I see it. I am in your debt; but I meant to return.'

'No doubt on't, sir; but when gemmen don't have no luggage, they sees missis before they go, sir.'

'Well, what am I in your debt? I can pay you here.'

'Five shillings, sir.'

'Here!' said the Duke; 'and tell me when a coach leaves this place to-morrow for Yorkshire.'

'Half-past six o'clock in the morning precisely,' said the ostler.

'Well, my good fellow, I depend upon your securing me a place; and that is for yourself,' added his Grace, throwing him a sovereign. 'Now, mind; I depend upon you.'

The man stared as if he had been suddenly taken into partnership with missis; at length he found his tongue.

'Your honour may depend upon me. Where would you like to sit? In or out? Back to your horses, or the front? Get you the box if you like. Where's your great coat, sir? I'll brush it for you.'

The bath and the breakfast brought our hero round a good deal, and at half-past two he stole to a solitary part of St. James's Park, to stretch his legs and collect his senses. We must now let our readers into a secret, which perhaps they have already unravelled. The Duke had hurried to London with the determination, not only of attending the debate, but of participating in it. His Grace was no politician; but the question at issue was one simple in its nature and so domestic in its spirit, that few men could have arrived at his period of life without having heard its merits, both too often and too amply discussed. He was master of all the points of interest, and he had sufficient confidence in himself to believe that he could do them justice. He walked up and down, conning over in his mind not only the remarks which he intended to make, but the very language in which he meant to offer them. As he

formed sentences, almost for the first time, his courage and his fancy alike warmed: his sanguine spirit sympathised with the nobility of the imaginary scene, and inspirited the intonations of his modulated voice.

About four o'clock he repaired to the House. Walking up one of the passages his progress was stopped by the back of an individual bowing with great civility to a patronising peer, and my-lording him with painful repetition. The nobleman was Lord Fitz-pompey; the bowing gentleman, Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh, the anti-aristocrat, and father of the first man of the day.

'George! is it possible!' exclaimed Lord Fitz-pompey. 'I will speak to you in the House,' said the Duke, passing on, and bowing to Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh.

He recalled his proxy from the Duke of Burlington, and accounted for his presence to many astonished friends by being on his way to the Continent; and, passing through London, thought he might as well be present, particularly as he was about to reside for some time in Catholic countries. It was the last compliment that he could pay his future host. 'Give me a pinch of snuff.'

The debate began. Don't be alarmed. I shall not describe it. Five or six peers had spoken, and one of the ministers had just sat down when the Duke of St. James rose. He was extremely nervous, but he repeated to himself the name of May Dacre for the hundredth time, and proceeded. He was nearly commencing 'May Dacre' instead of 'My Lords,' but he escaped this blunder. For the first five or ten minutes he spoke in almost as cold and lifeless a style as when he echoed the King's speech; but he was

young and seldom troubled them, and was listened to therefore with indulgence. The Duke warmed, and a courteous 'hear, hear,' frequently sounded; the Duke became totally free from embarrassment, and spoke with eloquence and energy. A cheer, a stranger in the House of Lords, rewarded and encouraged him. As an Irish landlord, his sincerity could not be disbelieved when he expressed his conviction of the safety of emancipation; but it was as an English proprietor and British noble that it was evident that his Grace felt most keenly upon this important measure. He described with power the peculiar injustice of the situation of the English Catholics. He professed to feel keenly upon this subject, because his native county had made him well acquainted with the temper of this class; he painted in glowing terms the loyalty, the wealth, the influence, the noble virtues of his Catholic neighbours; and he closed a speech of an hour's duration, in which he had shown that a worn subject was susceptible of novel treatment, and novel interest, amid loud and general cheers. The Lords gathered round him, and many personally congratulated him upon his distinguished success. The debate took its course. At three o'clock the pro-Catholics found themselves in a minority, but a minority in which the prescient might have well discovered the herald of future justice. The speech of the Duke of St. James was the speech of the night.

The Duke walked into White's. It was crowded. The first man who welcomed him was Annesley. He congratulated the Duke with a warmth for which the world did not give him credit.

'I assure you, my dear St. James, that I am one of the few people whom this display has not sur-

prised. I have long observed that you were formed for something better than mere frivolity. And between ourselves I am sick of it. Don't be surprised if you hear that I go to Algiers. Depend upon it that I am on the point of doing something dreadful.'

'Sup with me, St. James,' said Lord Squib; 'I will ask O'Connell to meet you.'

Lord Fitz-pompey and Lord Darrell were profuse in congratulations; but he broke away from them to welcome the man who now advanced. He was one of whom he never thought without a shudder, but whom, for all that, he greatly liked.

'My dear Duke of St. James,' said Arundel Dacre, 'how ashamed I am that this is the first time I have personally thanked you for all your goodness!'

'My dear Dacre, I have to thank you for proving for the first time to the world that I was not without discrimination.'

'No, no,' said Dacre, gaily and easily; 'all the congratulations and all the compliments to-night shall be for you. Believe me, my dear friend, I share your triumph.'

They shook hands with earnestness.

'May will read your speech with exultation,' said Arundel. 'I think we must thank her for making you an orator.'

The Duke faintly smiled and shook his head.

'And how are all our Yorkshire friends?' continued Arundel. 'I am disappointed again in getting down to them; but I hope in the course of the month to pay them a visit.'

'I shall see them in a day or two,' said the Duke. 'I pay Mr. Dacre one more visit before my departure form England.'

'Are you then indeed going?' asked Arundel, in a kind voice.

'For ever.'

'Nay, nay, *ever* is a strong word.'

'It becomes, then, my feelings. However, we will not talk of this. Can I bear any letter for you?'

'I have just written,' replied Arundel, in a gloomy voice, and with a changing countenance, 'and therefore will not trouble you. And yet——'

'What!'

'And yet the letter is an important letter: to me. The post, to be sure, never does miss; but if it were not troubling your Grace too much, I almost would ask you to be its bearer.'

'It will be there as soon,' said the Duke, 'for I shall be off in an hour.'

'I will take it out of the box then,' said Arundel; and he fetched it. 'Here is the letter,' said he on his return: 'pardon me if I impress upon you its importance. Excuse this emotion, but, indeed, this letter decides my fate. My happiness for life is dependent on its reception!'

He spoke with an air and voice of agitation.

The Duke received the letter in a manner scarcely less disturbed; and with a hope that they might meet before his departure, faintly murmured by one party, and scarcely responded to by the other, they parted.

'Well, now,' said the Duke, 'the farce is complete; and I have come to London to be the bearer of his offered heart! I like this, now. Is there a more contemptible, a more ludicrous, absolutely ludicrous ass than myself? Fear not for its delivery, most religiously shall it be consigned to the hand of its owner. The fellow has paid a compliment to my

honour or my simplicity: I fear the last, and really I feel rather proud. But away with these feelings! Have I not seen her in his arms? Pah! Thank God! I spoke. At least, I die in a blaze. Even Annesley does not think me quite a fool. O, May Dacre, May Dacre! if you were but mine, I should be the happiest fellow that ever breathed!'

He breakfasted, and then took his way to the Dragon with Two Tails. The morning was bright, and fresh, and beautiful, even in London. Joy came upon his heart, in spite of all his loneliness, and he was glad and sanguine. He arrived just in time. The coach was about to start. The faithful ostler was there with his great-coat, and the Duke found that he had three fellow-passengers. They were lawyers, and talked for the first two hours of nothing but the case respecting which they were going down into the country. At Woburn, a despatch arrived with the newspapers. All purchased one, and the Duke among the rest. He was well reported, and could now sympathise with, instead of smile at, the anxiety of Lord Darrell.

'The young Duke of St. James seems to have distinguished himself very much,' said the first lawyer.

'So I observe,' said the second one. 'The leading article calls our attention to his speech as the most brilliant delivered.'

'I am surprised,' said the third. 'I thought he was quite a different sort of person.'

'By no means,' said the first: 'I have always had a high opinion of him. I am not one of those who think the worse of a young man because he is a little wild.'

'Nor I,' said the second. 'Young blood, you know, is young blood.'

'A very intimate friend of mine, who knows the Duke of St. James well, once told me,' rejoined the first, 'that I was quite mistaken about him; that he was a person of no common talents; well read, quite a man of the world, and a good deal of wit, too; and let me tell you that in these days wit is no common thing.'

'Certainly not,' said the third. 'We have no wit now.'

'And a kind-hearted, generous fellow,' continued the first, 'and *very* unaffected.'

'I can't bear an affected man,' said the second, without looking off his paper. 'He seems to have made a very fine speech indeed.'

'I should not wonder at his turning out something great,' said the third.

'I have no doubt of it,' said the second.

'Many of these wild fellows do.'

'He is not so wild as we think,' said the first.

'But he is done up,' said the second.

'Is he indeed?' said the third. 'Perhaps by making a speech he wants a place?'

'People don't make speeches for nothing,' said the third.

'I shouldn't wonder if he is after a place in the Household,' said the second.

'Depend upon it, he looks to something more active,' said the first.

'Perhaps he would like to be head of the Admiralty?' said the second.

'Or the Treasury?' said the third.

'That is impossible!' said the first. 'He is too young.'

'He is as old as Pitt,' said the third.

'I hope he will resemble him in nothing but his age, then,' said the first.

'I look upon Pitt as the first man that ever lived,' said the third.

'What!' said the first. 'The man who worked up the national debt to nearly eight hundred millions!'

'What of that?' said the third. 'I look upon the national debt as the source of all our prosperity.'

'The source of all our taxes, you mean.'

'What is the harm of taxes?'

'The harm is, that you will soon have no trade; and when you have no trade, you will have no duties; and when you have no duties, you will have no dividends; and when you have no dividends, you will have no law; and then, where is your source of prosperity?' said the first.

But here the coach stopped, and the Duke got out for an hour.

By midnight they had reached a town not more than thirty miles from Dacre. The Duke was quite exhausted, and determined to stop. In half an hour he enjoyed that deep, dreamless slumber, with which no luxury can compete. One must have passed restless nights for years, to be able to appreciate the value of sound sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

A Last Appeal.

HE ROSE early, and managed to reach Dacre at the breakfast hour of the family. He discharged his chaise at the Park gate, and entered the house unseen. He took his way along a corridor lined with plants, which led to the small and favourite room in which the morning meetings of May and himself always took place when they were alone. As he lightly stepped along, he heard a voice that he could not mistake, as it were in animated converse. Agitated by sounds which ever created in him emotion, for a moment he paused. He starts, his eye sparkles with strange delight, a flush comes over his panting features, half of modesty, half of triumph. He listens to his own speech from the lips of the woman he loves. She is reading to her father with melodious energy the passage in which he describes the high qualities of his Catholic neighbours. The intonations of the voice indicate the deep sympathy of the reader. She ceases. He hears the admiring exclamation of his host. He rallies his strength, he advances, he

stands before them. She utters almost a shriek of delightful surprise as she welcomes him.

How much there was to say! how much to ask! how much to answer! Even Mr. Dacre poured forth questions like a boy. But May: she could not speak, but leant forward in her chair with an eager ear, and a look of congratulation, that rewarded him for all his exertion. Everything was to be told. How he went; whether he slept in the mail; where he went; what he did; whom he saw; what they said; what they thought; all must be answered. Then fresh exclamations of wonder, delight, and triumph. The Duke forgot everything but his love, and for three hours felt the happiest of men.

At length Mr. Dacre rose and looked at his watch with a shaking head. 'I have a most important appointment,' said he, 'and I must gallop to keep it. God bless you, my dear St. James! I could stay talking with you for ever; but you must be utterly wearied. Now, my dear boy, go to bed.'

'To bed!' exclaimed the Duke. 'Why, Tom Rawlins would laugh at you!'

'And who is Tom Rawlins?'

'Ah! I cannot tell you everything; but assuredly I am not going to bed.'

'Well, May, I leave him to your care; but do not let him talk any more.'

'Oh! sir,' said the Duke, 'I really had forgotten. I am the bearer to you, sir, of a letter from Mr. Arundel Dacre.' He gave it him.

As Mr. Dacre read the communication, his countenance changed, and the smile which before was on his face, vanished. But whether he were displeased, or only serious, it was impossible to ascertain, al-

though the Duke watched him narrowly. At length he said, 'May! here is a letter from Arundel, in which you are much interested.'

'Give it me, then, papa!'

'No, my love; we must speak of this together. But I am pressed for time. When I come home. Remember.' He quitted the room.

They were alone: the Duke began again talking, and Miss Dacre put her finger to her mouth, with a smile.

'I assure you,' said he, 'I am not wearied. I slept at ——y, and the only thing I now want is a good walk. Let me be your companion this morning!'

'I was thinking of paying nurse a visit. What say you?'

'Oh! I am ready; anywhere.'

She ran for her bonnet, and he kissed her handkerchief, which she left behind, and, I believe, everything else in the room which bore the slightest relation to her. And then the recollection of Arundel's letter came over him, and his joy fled. When she returned, he was standing before the fire, gloomy and dull.

'I fear you are tired,' she said.

'Not in the least.'

'I shall never forgive myself if all this exertion make you ill.'

'Why not?'

'Because, although I will not tell papa, I am sure my nonsense is the cause of your having gone to London.'

'It is probable; for you are the cause of all that does not disgrace me.' He advanced, and was about

to seize her hand; but the accursed miniature occurred to him, and he repressed his feelings, almost with a groan. She, too, had turned away her head, and was busily engaged in tending a flower.

'Because she has explicitly declared her feelings to me, and, sincere in that declaration, honours me by a friendship of which alone I am unworthy, am I to persecute her with my dishonoured overtures—the twice rejected? No, no!'

They took their way through the park, and he soon succeeded in re-assuming the tone that befitted their situation. Traits of the debate, and the debaters, which newspapers cannot convey, and which he had not yet recounted; anecdotes of Annesley and their friends, and other gossip, were offered for her amusement. But if she were amused, she was not lively, but singularly, unusually silent. There was only one point on which she seemed interested, and that was his speech. When he was cheered, and who particularly cheered; who gathered round him, and what they said after the debate: on all these points she was most inquisitive.

They rambled on: nurse was quite forgotten; and at length they found themselves in the beautiful valley, rendered more lovely by the ruins of the abbey. It was a place that the Duke could never forget, and which he ever avoided. He had never renewed his visit since he first gave vent, among its reverend ruins, to his overcharged and most tumultuous heart.

They stood in silence before the holy pile with its vaulting arches and crumbling walls, mellowed by the mild lustre of the declining sun. Not two years had fled since here he first staggered after the breaking glimpses of self-knowledge, and struggled to call

order from out the chaos of his mind. Not two years, and yet what a change had come over his existence! How diametrically opposite now were all his thoughts, and views, and feelings, to those which then controlled his fatal soul! How capable, as he firmly believed, was he now of discharging his duty to his Creator and his fellow-men! and yet the boon that ought to have been the reward for all this self-contest, the sweet seal that ought to have ratified this new contract of existence, was wanting.

'Ah!' he exclaimed aloud, and in a voice of anguish, 'ah! if I ne'er had left the walls of Dacre, how different might have been my lot!'

A gentle but involuntary pressure reminded him of the companion whom, for once in his life, he had for a moment forgotten.

'I feel it is madness; I feel it is worse than madness; but must I yield without a struggle, and see my dark fate cover me without an effort? Oh! yes, here, even here, where I have wept over your contempt, even here, although I subject myself to renewed rejection, let—let me tell you, before we part, how I adore you!'

She was silent; a strange courage came over his spirit; and, with a reckless boldness, and rapid voice, a misty sight, and total unconsciousness of all other existence, he resumed the words which had broken out, as if by inspiration.

'I am not worthy of you. Who is? I was worthless. I did not know it. Have not I struggled to be pure? have not I sighed on my nightly pillow for your blessing? Oh! could you read my heart (and sometimes, I think, you can read it, for indeed, with all its faults, it is without guile) I dare to hope that

you would pity me. Since we first met, your image has not quitted my conscience for a second. When you thought me least worthy; when you thought me vile, or mad, oh! by all that is sacred, I was the most miserable wretch that ever breathed, and flew to dissipation only for distraction!

'Not — not for a moment have I ceased to think you the best, the most beautiful, the most enchanting and endearing creature that ever graced our earth. Even when I first dared to whisper my insolent affection, believe me, even then, your presence controlled my spirit as no other woman had. I bent to you then in pride and power. The station that I could then offer you was not utterly unworthy of your perfection. I am now a beggar, or, worse, an insolvent noble, and dare I — dare I to ask you to share the fortunes that are broken, and the existence that is obscure?'

She turned; her arm fell over his shoulder; she buried her head in his breast.

CHAPTER X.

'Love is Like a Dizziness.'

R. DACRE returned home with an excellent appetite, and almost as keen a desire to renew his conversation with his guest; but dinner and the Duke were neither to be commanded. Miss Dacre also could not be found. No information could be obtained of them from any quarter. It was nearly seven o'clock, the hour of dinner. That meal, somewhat to Mr. Dacre's regret, was postponed for half an hour, servants were sent out, and the bell was rung, but no tidings. Mr. Dacre was a little annoyed and more alarmed; he was also hungry, and at half-past seven he sat down to a solitary meal.

About a quarter-past eight a figure rapped at the dining-room window: it was the young Duke. The fat butler seemed astonished, not to say shocked, at this violation of etiquette; nevertheless, he slowly opened the window.

'Anything the matter, George? Where is May?'

'Nothing. We lost our way. That is all. May —Miss Dacre desired me to say, that she would not join us at dinner.'

'I am sure, something has happened.'

'I assure you, my dear sir, nothing, nothing at all the least unpleasant, but we took the wrong turning. All my fault.'

'Shall I send for the soup?'

'No. I am not hungry, I will take some wine.' So saying, his Grace poured out a tumbler of claret.

'Shall I take your Grace's hat?' asked the fat butler.

'Dear me! have I my hat on?'

This was not the only evidence afforded by our hero's conduct that his presence of mind had slightly deserted him. He was soon buried in a deep reverie, and sat with a full plate, but idle knife and fork before him, a perfect puzzle to the fat butler, who had hitherto considered his Grace the very pink of propriety.

'George, you have eaten no dinner,' said Mr. Dacre.

'Thank you, a very good one indeed, a remarkably good dinner. Give me some red wine, if you please.'

At length they were left alone.

'I have some good news for you, George.'

'Indeed.'

'I think I have let Rosemount.'

'So!'

'And exactly to the kind of person that you wanted, a man who will take a pride, although merely a tenant, in not permitting his poor neighbours to feel the *want* of a landlord. You will never guess: Lord Mildmay!'

'What did you say of Lord Mildmay, sir?'

'My dear fellow, your wits are wool-gathering; I say I think I have let Rosemount.'

'Oh! I have changed my mind about letting Rosemount.'

'My dear Duke, there is no trouble which I will grudge, to further your interests; but really I must beg, in future, that you will, at least, apprise me when you change your mind. There is nothing, as we have both agreed, more desirable than to find an eligible tenant for Rosemount. You never can expect to have a more beneficial one than Lord Mildmay; and really, unless you have positively promised the place to another person (which, excuse me for saying, you were not authorised to do) I must insist, after what has passed, upon his having the preference.'

'My dear sir, I only changed my mind this afternoon: I couldn't tell you before. I have promised it to no one; but I think of living there myself.'

'Yourself! Oh! if that be the case, I shall be quite reconciled to the disappointment of Lord Mildmay. But what in the name of goodness, my dear fellow, has produced this wonderful revolution in all your plans in the course of a few hours? I thought you were going to mope away life on the Lake of Geneva, or dawdle it away in Florence or Rome.'

'It is very odd, sir. I can hardly believe it myself: and yet it must be true. I hear her voice even at this moment. Oh! my dear Mr. Dacre, I am the happiest fellow that ever breathed!'

'What is all this?'

'Is it possible, my dear sir, that you have not long before detected the feelings I ventured to entertain for your daughter? In a word, she requires only your sanction to my being the most fortunate of men.'

'My dear friend, my dear, dear boy!' cried Mr. Dacre, rising from his chair and embracing him, 'it is out of the power of man to impart to me any event which could afford me such exquisite pleasure! Indeed, indeed, it is to me most surprising! for I had been induced to suspect, George, that some explanation had passed between you and May, which, while it accounted for your mutual esteem, gave little hope of a stronger sentiment.'

'I believe, sir,' said the young Duke, with a smile, 'I was obstinate.'

'Well, this changes all our plans. I have intended, for this fortnight past, to speak to you finally on your affairs. No better time than the present; and, in the first place——'

But, really, this interview is confidential.

CHAPTER XI.

'PERFECTION IN A PETTICOAT.'

HEY come not: it is late. He is already telling all! She relapses into her sweet reverie. Her thought fixes on no subject; her mind is intent on no idea; her soul is melted into dreamy delight; her only consciousness is perfect bliss! Sweet sounds still echo in her ear, and still her pure pulse beats, from the first embrace of passion.

The door opens, and her father enters, leaning upon the arm of her beloved. Yes, he has told all! Mr. Dacre approached, and, bending down, pressed the lips of his child. It was the seal to their plighted faith, and told, without speech, that the blessing of a parent mingled with the vows of a lover! No other intimation was at present necessary; but she, the daughter, thought now only of her father, that friend of her long life, whose love had ne'er been wanting: was she about to leave him? She arose, she threw her arms around his neck and wept.

The young Duke walked away, that his presence might not control the full expression of her hallowed

soul. 'This jewel is mine,' was his thought; 'what, what have I done to be so blessed?'

In a few minutes he again joined them, and was seated by her side; and Mr. Dacre considerately remembered that he wished to see his steward, and they were left alone. Their eyes meet, and their soft looks tell that they were thinking of each other. His arm steals round the back of her chair, and with his other hand he gently captures hers.

First love, first love! how many a glowing bard has sung thy beauties! How many a poor devil of a prosing novelist, like myself, has echoed all our superiors, the poets, teach us! No doubt, thou rosy god of young Desire, thou art a most bewitching little demon; and yet, for my part, give me last love.

Ask a man which turned out best, the first horse he bought, or the one he now canters on? Ask—but in short there is nothing in which knowledge is more important and experience more valuable than in love. When we first love, we are enamoured of our own imaginations. Our thoughts are high, our feelings rise from out the deepest caves of the tumultuous tide of our full life. We look around for one to share our exquisite existence, and sanctify the beauties of our being.

But those beauties are only in our thoughts. We feel like heroes, when we are but boys. Yet our mistress must bear a relation, not to ourselves, but to our imagination. She must be a real heroine, while our perfection is but ideal. And the quick and dangerous fancy of our race will, at first, rise to the pitch. She is all we can conceive. Mild and pure as youthful priests, we bow down before our altar. But the idol to which we breathe our warm and

gushing vows, and bend our eager knees, all its power, does it not exist only in our idea; all its beauty, is it not the creation of our excited fancy? And then the sweetest of superstitions ends. The long delusion bursts, and we are left like men upon a heath when fairies vanish; cold and dreary, gloomy, bitter, harsh, existence seems a blunder.

But just when we are most miserable, and curse the poet's cunning and our own conceits, there lights upon our path, just like a ray fresh from the sun, some sparkling child of light, that makes us think we are premature, at least, in our resolves. Yet we are determined not to be taken in, and try her well in all the points in which the others failed. One by one, her charms steal on our warming soul, as, one by one, those of the other beauty sadly stole away, and then we bless our stars, and feel quite sure that we have found perfection in a petticoat.

But our Duke—where are we? He had read woman thoroughly, and consequently knew how to value the virgin pages on which his thoughts now fixed. He and May Dacre wandered in the woods, and nature seemed to them more beautiful from their beautiful loves. They gazed upon the sky; a brighter light fell o'er the luminous earth. Sweeter to them the fragrance of the sweetest flowers, and a more balmy breath brought on the universal promise of the opening year.

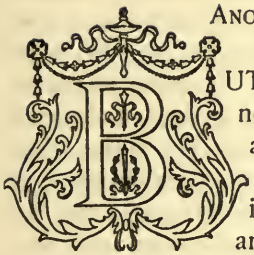
They wandered in the woods, and there they breathed their mutual adoration. She to him was all in all, and he to her was like a new divinity. She poured forth all that she long had felt, and scarcely could suppress. From the moment he tore her from the insulter's arms, his image fixed in her heart, and

the struggle which she experienced to repel his renewed vows was great indeed. When she heard of his misfortunes, she had wept; but it was the strange delight she experienced when his letter arrived to her father that first convinced her how irrevocably her mind was his.

And now she does not cease to blame herself for all her past obduracy; now she will not for a moment yield that he could have been ever anything but all that was pure, and beautiful, and good.

CHAPTER XII.

Another Betrothal.



UT although we are in love, business must not be utterly neglected, and Mr. Dacre insisted that the young Duke should for one morning cease to wander in his park, and listen to the result of his exertions during the last three months. His Grace listened. Rents had not risen, but it was hoped that they had seen their worst; the railroad had been successfully opposed; and coals had improved. The London mansion and the Alhambra had both been disposed of, and well: the first to the new French Ambassador, and the second to a grey-headed stock-jobber, very rich, who, having no society, determined to make solitude amusing. The proceeds of these sales, together with sundry sums obtained by converting into cash the stud, the furniture, and the *bijouterie,* produced a most respectable fund, which nearly paid off the annoying miscellaneous debts. For the rest, Mr. Dacre, while he agreed that it was on the whole advisable that the buildings should be completed, deter-

mined that none of the estates should be sold, or even mortgaged. His plan was to procrastinate the termination of these undertakings, and to allow each year itself to afford the necessary supplies. By annually setting aside one hundred thousand pounds, in seven or eight years he hoped to find everything completed and all debts cleared. He did not think that the extravagance of the Duke could justify any diminution in the sum which had hitherto been apportioned for the maintenance of the Irish establishments; but he was of opinion that the decreased portion which they, as well as the western estates, now afforded to the total income, was a sufficient reason. Fourteen thousand a-year were consequently allotted to Ireland, and seven to Pen Bronnock. There remained to the Duke about thirty thousand per annum; but then Hauteville was to be kept up with this. Mr. Dacre proposed that the young people should reside at Rosemount, and that consequently they might form their establishment from the Castle, without reducing their Yorkshire appointments, and avail themselves, without any obligation, or even the opportunity, of great expenses, of all the advantages afforded by the necessary expenditure. Finally, Mr. Dacre presented his son with his town mansion and furniture; and as the young Duke insisted that the settlements upon her Grace should be prepared in full reference to his inherited and future income, this generous father at once made over to him the great bulk of his personal property amounting to upwards of a hundred thousand pounds, a little ready money, of which he knew the value.

The Duke of St. James had duly informed his uncle, the Earl of Fitz-pompey, of the intended change

in his condition, and in answer received the following letter:—

'Fitz-pompey Hall, May, 18—.

'My dear George,—Your letter did not give us so much surprise as you expected; but I assure you it gave us as much pleasure. You have shown your wisdom and your taste in your choice; and I am free to confess that I am acquainted with no one more worthy of the station which the Duchess of St. James must always fill in society, and more calculated to maintain the dignity of your family, than the lady whom you are about to introduce to us as our niece. Believe me, my dear George, that the notification of this agreeable event has occasioned even additional gratification both to your aunt and to myself, from the reflection that you are about to ally yourself with a family in whose welfare we must ever take an especial interest, and whom we may in a manner look upon as our own relatives. For, my dear George, in answer to your flattering and most pleasing communication, it is my truly agreeable duty to inform you (and, believe me, you are the first person out of our immediate family to whom this intelligence is made known) that our Caroline, in whose happiness we are well assured you take a lively interest, is about to be united to one who may now be described as your near relative, namely, Mr. Arundel Dacre.

'It has been a long attachment, though for a considerable time, I confess, unknown to us; and indeed at first sight, with Caroline's rank and other advantages, it may not appear, in a mere worldly point of view, so desirable a connection as some perhaps

might expect. And to be quite confidential, both your aunt and myself were at first a little disinclined (great as our esteem and regard have ever been for him), a little disinclined, I say, to the union. But Dacre is certainly the most rising man of the day. In point of family, he is second to none; and his uncle has indeed behaved in the most truly liberal manner. I assure you, he considers him as a son; and even if there were no other inducement, the mere fact of your connection with the family would alone not only reconcile, but, so to say, make us perfectly satisfied with the arrangement. It is unnecessary to speak to you of the antiquity of the Dacres. Arundel will ultimately be one of the richest Commoners, and I think it is not too bold to anticipate, taking into consideration the family into which he marries, and above all, his connection with you, that we may finally succeed in having him called up to us. You are of course aware that there was once a barony in the family.

'Everybody talks of your speech. I assure you, although I ever gave you credit for uncommon talents, I was astonished. So you are to have the vacant ribbon! Why did you not tell me? I learnt it to-day, from Lord Bobbleshim. But we must not quarrel with men in love for not communicating.

'You ask me for news of all your old friends. You of course saw the death of old Annesley. The new Lord took his seat yesterday; he was introduced by Lord Bloomerly. I was not surprised to hear in the evening that he was about to be married to Lady Charlotte, though the world affect to be astonished. I should not forget to say that Lord Annesley asked

most particularly after you. For him, quite warm, I assure you.

'The oddest thing has happened to your friend, Lord Squib. Old Colonel Carlisle is dead, and has left his whole fortune, some say half a million, to the oddest person, merely because she had the reputation of being his daughter. Quite an odd person, you understand me: Mrs. Montfort. St. Maurice says you know her; but we must not talk of these things now. Well, Squib is going to be married to her. He says that he knows all his old friends will cut him when they are married, and so he is determined to give them an excuse. I understand she is a fine woman. He talks of living at Rome and Florence for a year or two.

'Lord Darrell is about to marry Harriet Wrekin; and between ourselves (but don't let this go any further at present) I have very little doubt that young Pococurante will shortly be united to Isabel. Connected as we are with the Shropshires, these excellent alliances are gratifying.

'I see very little of Lucius Grafton. He seems ill. I understand, for certain, that her Ladyship opposes the divorce. *On dit,* she has got hold of some letters, through the treachery of her soubrette, whom he supposed quite his creature, and that your friend is rather taken in. But I should not think this true. People talk very loosely. There was a gay party at Mrs. Dallington's the other night, who asked very kindly after you.

'I think I have now written you a very long letter. I once more congratulate you on your admirable selection, and with the united remembrance of our circle, particularly Caroline, who will write per-

haps by this post to Miss Dacre, believe me, dear George, your truly affectionate uncle,

'FITZ-POMPEY.

'P.S.—Lord Marylebone is very unpopular, quite a brute. We all miss you.'

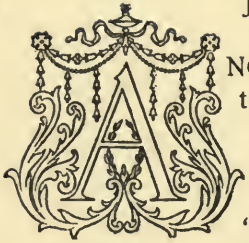
It is not to be supposed that this letter conveyed the first intimation to the Duke of St. James of the most interesting event of which it spoke. On the contrary, he had long been aware of the whole affair; but we have been too much engaged with his own conduct to find time to let the reader into the secret, which, like all secrets, it is to be hoped was no secret. Next to gaining the affections of May Dacre, it was impossible for any event to occur more delightful to our hero than the present. His heart had often misgiven him when he had thought of Caroline. Now she was happy, and not only happy, but connected with him for life, just as he wished. Arundel Dacre, too, of all men he most wished to like, and indeed most liked. One feeling alone had prevented them from being bosom friends, and that feeling had long triumphantly vanished.

May had been almost from the beginning the *confidante* of her cousin. In vain, however, had she beseeched him to entrust all to her father. Although he now repented his past feelings he could not be induced to change; and not till he had entered Parliament and succeeded and gained a name, which would reflect honour on the family with which he wished to identify himself, would he impart to his uncle the secret of his heart, and gain that support without which his great object could never have

been achieved. The Duke of St. James, by returning him to Parliament, had been the unconscious cause of all his happiness, and ardently did he pray that his generous friend might succeed in what he was well aware was his secret aspiration, and that his beloved cousin might yield her hand to the only man whom Arundel Dacre considered worthy of her.

CHAPTER XIII.

Joy's Beginning.



NOTHER week brought another letter from the Earl of Fitz-pompey.

The Earl of Fitz-pompey to the Duke of St. James. [Read this alone.]

'My dear George,

'I beg you will not be alarmed by the above memorandum, which I thought it but prudent to prefix. A very disagreeable affair has just taken place, and to a degree exceedingly alarming; but it might have turned out much more distressing, and, on the whole, we may all congratulate ourselves at the result. Not to keep you in fearful suspense, I beg to recall your recollection to the rumour which I noticed in my last, of the intention of Lady Aphrodite Grafton to oppose the divorce. A few days back, her brother Lord Wariston, with whom I was previously unacquainted, called upon me by appointment, having previously requested a private interview. The object of his seeing me was no less than to submit to my inspection the letters by aid of which it was anticipated that the divorce might be successfully opposed. You will be astounded

to hear that these consist of a long series of correspondence of Mrs. Dallington Vere's, developing, I am shocked to say, machinations of a very alarming nature, the effect of which, my dear George, was no less than very materially to control your fortunes in life, and those of that charming and truly admirable lady whom you have delighted us all so much by declaring to be our future relative.

'From the very delicate nature of the disclosures, Lord Wariston felt the great importance of obtaining all necessary results without making them public; and, actuated by these feelings, he applied to me, both as your nearest relative, and an acquaintance of Sir Lucius, and, as he expressed it, and I may be permitted to repeat, as one whose experience in the management of difficult and delicate negotiations was not altogether unknown, in order that I might be put in possession of the facts of the case, advise and perhaps interfere for the common good.

'Under these circumstances, and taking into consideration the extreme difficulty attendant upon a satisfactory arrangement of the affair, I thought fit, in confidence, to apply to Arundel, whose talents I consider of the first order, and only equalled by his prudence and calm temper. As a relation, too, of more than one of the parties concerned, it was perhaps only proper that the correspondence should be submitted to him.

'I am sorry to say, my dear George, that Arundel behaved in a very odd manner, and not at all with that discretion which might have been expected both from one of his remarkably sober and staid disposition, and one not a little experienced in diplomatic life. He exhibited the most unequivocal signs of his

displeasure at the conduct of the parties principally concerned, and expressed himself in so vindictive a manner against one of them, that I very much regretted my application, and requested him to be cool.

'He seemed to yield to my solicitations, but I regret to say his composure was only feigned, and the next morning he and Sir Lucius Grafton met. Sir Lucius fired first, without effect, but Arundel's aim was more fatal, and his ball was lodged in the thigh of his adversary. Sir Lucius has only been saved by amputation; and I need not remark to you that to such a man life on such conditions is scarcely desirable. All idea of a divorce is quite given over. The letters in question were stolen from his cabinet by his valet, and given to a soubrette of his wife, whom Sir Lucius considered in his interest, but who, as you see, betrayed him.

'For me remained the not very agreeable office of seeing Mrs. Dallington Vere. I made known to her, in a manner as little offensive as possible, the object of my visit. The scene, my dear George, was trying; and I think it hard that the follies of a parcel of young people should really place me in such a distressing position. She fainted, &c., and wished the letters to be given up, but Lord Wariston would not consent to this, though he promised to keep their contents secret provided she quitted the country. She goes directly; and I am well assured, which is not the least surprising part of this strange history, that her affairs are in a state of great distraction. The relatives of her late husband are about again to try the will, and with prospect of success. She has been negotiating with them for some time through the

agency of Sir Lucius Grafton, and the late *exposé* will not favour her interests.

'If anything further happens, my dear George, depend upon my writing; but Arundel desires me to say that on Saturday he will run down to Dacre for a few days, as he very much wishes to see you and all. With our united remembrance to Mr. and Miss Dacre,

'Ever, my dear George,
'Your very affectionate uncle,
'FITZ-POMPEY.'

The young Duke turned with trembling and disgust from these dark terminations of unprincipled careers; and these fatal evidences of the indulgence of unbridled passions. How nearly, too, had he been shipwrecked in this moral whirlpool! With what gratitude did he not invoke the beneficent Providence that had not permitted the innate seeds of human virtue to be blighted in his wild and neglected soul! With what admiration did he not gaze upon the pure and beautiful being whose virtue and whose loveliness were the causes of his regeneration, the sources of his present happiness, and the guarantees of his future joy!

Four years have now elapsed since the young Duke of St. James was united to May Dacre; and it would not be too bold to declare, that during that period he has never for an instant ceased to consider himself the happiest and the most fortunate of men. His life is passed in the agreeable discharge of all the important duties of his exalted station, and his present career is by far a better answer to the lucubrations of young Duncan Macmorrogh than all the abstract argu-

ments that ever yet were offered in favour of the existence of an aristocracy.

Hauteville House and Hauteville Castle proceed in regular course. These magnificent dwellings will never erase simple and delightful Rosemount from the grateful memory of the Duchess of St. James. Parliament, and in a degree society, invite the Duke and Duchess each year to the metropolis, and Mr. Dacre is generally their guest. Their most intimate and beloved friends are Arundel and his wife, and as Lady Caroline now heads the establishment of Castle Dacre, they are seldom separated. But among their most agreeable company is a young gentleman styled by courtesy Dacre, Marquess of Hauteville, and his young sister, who has not yet escaped from her beautiful mother's arms, and who beareth the blooming title of the Lady May.

IXION IN HEAVEN

ADVERTISEMENT

'IXION, King of Thessaly, famous for its horses, married Dia, daughter of Deioneus, who, in consequence of his son-in-law's non-fulfilment of his engagements, stole away some of the monarch's steeds. Ixion concealed his resentment under the mask of friendship. He invited his father-in-law to a feast at Larissa, the capital of his kingdom; and when Deioneus arrived according to his appointment, he threw him into a pit which he had previously filled with burning coals. This treachery so irritated the neighbouring princes, that all of them refused to perform the usual ceremony, by which a man was then purified of murder, and Ixion was shunned and despised by all mankind. Jupiter had compassion upon him, carried him to Heaven, and introduced him to the Father of the Gods. Such a favour, which ought to have awakened gratitude in Ixion, only served to inflame his bad passions; he became enamoured of Juno, and attempted to seduce her. Juno was willing to gratify the passion of Ixion, though, according to others,' &c.—*Classical Dictionary,* art. *'Ixion.'*

IXION IN HEAVEN

PART I.

An Errant King.

THE thunder groaned, the wind howled, the rain fell in hissing torrents, impenetrable darkness covered the earth.

A blue and forky flash darted a momentary light over the landscape. A Doric temple rose in the centre of a small and verdant plain, surrounded on all sides by green and hanging woods.

'Jove is my only friend,' exclaimed a wanderer, as he muffled himself up in his mantle; 'and were it not for the porch of his temple, this night, methinks, would complete the work of my loving wife and my dutiful subjects.'

The thunder died away, the wind sank into silence, the rain ceased, and the parting clouds exhibited the glittering crescent of the young moon. A sonorous and majestic voice sounded from the skies:—

'Who art thou that hast no other friend than Jove?'

'One whom all mankind unite in calling a wretch.'

'Art thou a philosopher?'

'If philosophy be endurance. But for the rest, I was sometime a king, and am now a scatterling.'

'How do they call thee?

'Ixion of Thessaly.'

'Ixion of Thessaly! I thought he was a happy man. I heard that he was just married.'

'Father of Gods and men! for I deem thee such, Thessaly is not Olympus. Conjugal felicity is only the portion of the immortals!'

'Hem! What! was Dia jealous, which is common; or false, which is commoner; or both, which is commonest?'

'It may be neither. We quarrelled about nothing. Where there is little sympathy, or too much, the splitting of a straw is plot enough for a domestic tragedy. I was careless, her friends stigmatised me as callous; she cold, her friends styled her magnanimous. Public opinion was all on her side, merely because I did not choose that the world should interfere between me and my wife. Dia took the world's advice upon every point, and the world decided that she always acted rightly. However, life is life, either in a palace or a cave. I am glad you ordered it to leave off thundering.'

'A cool dog this. And Dia left thee?

'No; I left her.'

'What, craven?'

'Not exactly. The truth is——'tis a long story. I was over head and ears in debt.'

'Ah! that accounts for everything. Nothing so harassing as a want of money! But what lucky fel-

lows you mortals are with your *post-obits!* We Immortals are deprived of this resource. I was obliged to get up a rebellion against my father, because he kept me so short, and could not die.'

'You could have married for money. I did.'

'I had no opportunity, there was so little female society in those days. When I came out, there were no heiresses except the Parcæ, confirmed old maids; and no very rich dowager, except my grandmother, old Terra.'

'Just the thing; the older the better. However, I married Dia, the daughter of Deioneus, with a prodigious portion; but after the ceremony the old gentleman would not fulfil his part of the contract without my giving up my stud. Can you conceive anything more unreasonable? I smothered my resentment at the time; for the truth is, my tradesmen all renewed my credit on the strength of the match, and so we went on very well for a year; but at last they began to smell a rat, and grew importunate. I entreated Dia to interfere; but she was a paragon of daughters, and always took the side of her father. If she had only been dutiful to her husband, she would have been a perfect woman. At last I invited Deioneus to the Larissa races, with the intention of conciliating him. The unprincipled old man bought the horse that I had backed, and by which I intended to have redeemed my fortunes, and withdrew it. My book was ruined. I dissembled my rage. I dug a pit in our garden, and filled it with burning coals. As my father-in-law and myself were taking a stroll after dinner, the worthy Deioneus fell in, merely by accident. Dia proclaimed me the murderer of her father, and, as a satisfaction to her wounded feelings, ear-

nestly requested her subjects to decapitate her husband. She certainly was the best of daughters. There was no withstanding public opinion, an infuriated rabble, and a magnanimous wife at the same time. They surrounded my palace: I cut my way through the greasy-capped multitude, sword in hand, and gained a neighbouring Court, where I solicited my brother princes to purify me from the supposed murder. If I had only murdered a subject, they would have supported me against the people; but Deioneus being a crowned head, like themselves, they declared they would not countenance so immoral a being as his son-in-law. And so, at length, after much wandering, and shunned by all my species, I am here, Jove, in much higher society than I ever expected to mingle.'

'Well, thou art a frank dog, and in a sufficiently severe scrape. The Gods must have pity on those for whom men have none. It is evident that Earth is too hot for thee at present, so I think thou hadst better come and stay a few weeks with us in Heaven.'

'Take my thanks for hecatombs, great Jove. Thou art, indeed, a God!'

'I hardly know whether our life will suit you. We dine at sunset; for Apollo is so much engaged that he cannot join us sooner, and no dinner goes off well without him. In the morning you are your own master, and must find amusement where you can. Diana will show you some tolerable sport. Do you shoot?'

'No arrow surer. Fear not for me, Ægiochus: I am always at home. But how am I to get to you?'

'I will send Mercury; he is the best travelling companion in the world. What ho! my Eagle!'

The clouds joined, and darkness again fell over the earth.

'So! tread softly. Don't be nervous. Are you sick?'

'A little nausea; 'tis nothing.'

'The novelty of the motion. The best thing is a beefsteak. We will stop at Taurus and take one.'

'You have been a great traveller, Mercury?'

'I have seen the world.'

'Ah! a wondrous spectacle. I long to travel.'

'The same thing over and over again. Little novelty and much change. I am wearied with exertion, and if I could get a pension would retire.'

'And yet travel brings wisdom.'

'It cures us of care. Seeing much we feel little, and learn how very petty are all those great affairs which cost us such anxiety.'

'I feel that already myself. Floating in this blue æther, what the devil is my wife to me, and her dirty Earth! My persecuting enemies seem so many pismires; and as for my debts, which have occasioned me so many brooding moments, honour and infamy, credit and beggary, seem to me alike ridiculous.'

'Your mind is opening, Ixion. You will soon be a man of the world. To the left, and keep clear of that star.'

'Who lives there?'

'The Fates know, not I. Some low people who are trying to shine into notice. 'Tis a parvenu planet, and only sprung into space within this century. We do not visit them.'

'Poor devils! I feel hungry.'

'All right. We shall get into Heaven by the first dinner bolt. You cannot arrive at a strange house at

a better moment. We shall just have time to dress. I would not spoil my appetite by luncheon. Jupiter keeps a capital cook.'

'I have heard of Nectar and Ambrosia.'

'Poh! nobody touches them. They are regular old-fashioned celestial food, and merely put upon the side-table. Nothing goes down in Heaven now but infernal cookery. We took our *chef* from Proserpine.'

'Were you ever in Hell?'

'Several times. 'Tis the fashion now among the Olympians to pass the winter there.'

'Is this the season in Heaven?'

'Yes; you are lucky. Olympus is quite full.'

'It was kind of Jupiter to invite me.'

'Ay! he has his good points. And, no doubt, he has taken a liking to you, which is all very well. But be upon your guard. He has no heart, and is as capricious as he is tyrannical.'

'Gods cannot be more unkind to me than men have been.'

'All those who have suffered think they have seen the worst. A great mistake. However, you are now in the high road to preferment, so we will not be dull. There are some good fellows enough amongst us. You will like old Neptune.'

'Is he there now?'

'Yes, he generally passes his summer with us. There is little stirring in the ocean at that season.'

'I am anxious to see Mars.'

'Oh! a brute, more a bully than a hero. Not at all in the best set. These mustachioed gentry are by no means the rage at present in Olympus. The women are all literary now, and Minerva has quite

eclipsed Venus. Apollo is our hero. You must read his last work.'

'I hate reading.'

'So do I. I have no time, and seldom do anything in that way but glance at a newspaper. Study and action will not combine.'

'I suppose I shall find the Goddesses very proud?'

'You will find them as you find women below, of different dispositions with the same object. Venus is a flirt; Minerva a prude, who fancies she has a correct taste and a strong mind; and Juno a politician. As for the rest, faint heart never won fair lady; take a friendly hint, and do not be alarmed.'

'I fear nothing. My mind mounts with my fortunes. We are above the clouds. They form beneath us a vast and snowy region, dim and irregular, as I have sometimes seen them clustering upon the horizon's ridge at sunset, like a raging sea stilled by some sudden supernatural frost and frozen into form! How bright the air above us, and how delicate its fragrant breath! I scarcely breathe, and yet my pulses beat like my first youth. I hardly feel my being. A splendour falls upon your presence. You seem, indeed, a God! Am I so glorious? This, this is Heaven!'

The travellers landed on a vast flight of sparkling steps of lapis-lazuli. Ascending, they entered beautiful gardens; winding walks that yielded to the feet, and accelerated your passage by their rebounding pressure; fragrant shrubs covered with dazzling flowers, the fleeting tints of which changed every moment; groups of tall trees, with strange birds of brilliant and variegated plumage, singing and reposing in their sheeny foliage, and fountains of perfumes.

Before them rose an illimitable and golden palace, with high spreading domes of pearl, and long windows of crystal. Around the huge portal of ruby was ranged a company of winged genii, who smiled on Mercury as he passed them with his charge.

'The Father of Gods and men is dressing,' said the son of Maia. 'I shall attend his toilet and inform him of your arrival. These are your rooms. Dinner will be ready in half an hour. I will call for you as I go down. You can be formally presented in the evening. At that time, inspired by liqueurs and his matchless band of wind instruments, you will agree with the world that Ægiochus is the most finished God in existence.'

'Now, Ixion, are you ready?'

'Even so. What says Jove?'

'He smiled, but said nothing. He was trying on a new robe. By this time he is seated. Hark! the thunder. Come on!'

They entered a cupolaed hall. Seats of ivory and gold were ranged round a circular table of cedar, inlaid with the campaigns against the Titans, in silver exquisitely worked, a nuptial present of Vulcan. The service of gold plate threw all the ideas of the King of Thessaly as to royal magnificence into the darkest shade. The enormous plateau represented the constellations. Ixion viewed the Father of Gods and men with great interest, who, however, did not notice him. He acknowledged the majesty of that countenance whose nod shook Olympus. Majestically robust and luxuriantly lusty, his tapering waist was evidently immortal, for it defied Time, and his splendid auburn curls, parted on his forehead with celestial precision, descended over cheeks

glowing with the purple radiancy of perpetual manhood.

The haughty Juno was seated on his left hand and Ceres on his right. For the rest of the company there was Neptune, Latona, Minerva, and Apollo, and when Mercury and Ixion had taken their places, one seat was still vacant.

'Where is Diana?' inquired Jupiter, with a frown.

'My sister is hunting,' said Apollo.

'She is always too late for dinner,' said Jupiter. 'No habit is less Goddess-like.'

'Godlike pursuits cannot be expected to induce Goddess-like manners,' said Juno, with a sneer.

'I have no doubt Diana will be here directly,' said Latona, mildly.

Jupiter seemed pacified, and at that instant the absent guest returned.

'Good sport, Di?' inquired Neptune.

'Very fair, uncle. Mamma,' continued the sister of Apollo, addressing herself to Juno, whom she ever thus styled when she wished to conciliate her, 'I have brought you a new peacock.'

Juno was fond of pets, and was conciliated by the present.

'Bacchus made a great noise about this wine, Mercury,' said Jupiter, 'but I think with little cause. What think you?'

'It pleases me, but I am fatigued, and then all wine is agreeable.'

'You have had a long journey,' replied the Thunderer. 'Ixion, I am glad to see you in Heaven.'

'Your Majesty arrived to-day?' inquired Minerva, to whom the King of Thessaly sat next.

'Within this hour.'

'You must leave off talking of Time now,' said Minerva, with a severe smile. 'Pray is there anything new in Greece?'

'I have not been at all in society lately.'

'No new edition of Homer? I admire him exceedingly.'

'All about Greece interests me,' said Apollo, who, although handsome, was a somewhat melancholy lack-a-daisical looking personage, with his shirt collar thrown open, and his long curls theatrically arranged. 'All about Greece interests me. I always consider Greece my peculiar property. My best poems were written at Delphi. I travelled in Greece when I was young. I envy mankind.'

'Indeed!' said Ixion.

'Yes: they at least can look forward to a termination of the ennui of existence, but for us Celestials there is no prospect. Say what they like, immortality is a bore.'

'You eat nothing, Apollo,' said Ceres.

'Nor drink,' said Neptune.

'To eat, to drink, what is it but to live; and what is life but death, if death be that which all men deem it, a thing insufferable, and to be shunned. I refresh myself now only with soda-water and biscuits. Ganymede, bring some.'

Now, although the *cuisine* of Olympus was considered perfect, the forlorn poet had unfortunately fixed upon the only two articles which were not comprised in its cellar or larder. In Heaven, there was neither soda-water nor biscuits. A great confusion consequently ensued; but at length the bard, whose love of fame was only equalled by his horror of getting fat, consoled himself with a swan

stuffed with truffles, and a bottle of strong Tenedos wine.

'What do you think of Homer?' inquired Minerva of Apollo. 'Is he not delightful?'

'If you think so.'

'Nay, I am desirous of your opinion.'

'Then you should not have given me yours, for your taste is too fine for me to dare to differ with it.'

'I have suspected, for some time, that you are rather a heretic.'

'Why, the truth is,' replied Apollo, playing with his rings, 'I do not think much of Homer. Homer was not esteemed in his own age, and our contemporaries are generally our best judges. The fact is, there are very few people who are qualified to decide upon matters of taste. A certain set, for certain reasons, resolve to cry up a certain writer, and the great mass soon join in. All is cant. And the present admiration of Homer is not less so. They say I have borrowed a great deal from him. The truth is, I never read Homer since I was a child, and I thought of him then what I think of him now, a writer of some wild irregular power, totally deficient in taste. Depend upon it, our contemporaries are our best judges, and his contemporaries decided that Homer was nothing. A great poet cannot be kept down. Look at my case. Marsyas said of my first volume that it was pretty good poetry for a God, and in answer I wrote a satire, and flayed Marsyas alive. But what is poetry, and what is criticism, and what is life? Air. And what is air? Do you know? I don't. All is mystery, and all is gloom, and ever and anon from out the clouds a star breaks forth, and glitters, and that star is Poetry.'

'Splendid!' exclaimed Minerva.

'I do not exactly understand you,' said Neptune.

'Have you heard from Proserpine, lately?' inquired Jupiter of Ceres.

'Yesterday,' said the domestic mother. 'They talk of soon joining us. But Pluto is at present so busy, owing to the amazing quantity of wars going on now, that I am almost afraid he will scarcely be able to accompany her.'

Juno exchanged a telegraphic nod with Ceres. The Goddesses rose, and retired.

'Come, old boy,' said Jupiter to Ixion, instantly throwing off all his chivalric majesty, 'I drink your welcome in a magnum of Maraschino. Damn your poetry, Apollo, and, Mercury, give us one of your good stories.'

'Well! what do you think of him?' asked Juno.

'He appears to have a fine mind,' said Minerva.

'Poh! he has very fine eyes,' said Juno.

'He seems a very nice, quiet young gentleman,' said Ceres.

'I have no doubt he is very amiable,' said Latona.

'He must have felt very strange,' said Diana.

Hercules arrived with his bride Hebe; soon after the Graces dropped in, the most delightful personages in the world for a *soirée,* so useful and ready for anything. Afterwards came a few of the Muses, Thalia, Melpomene, and Terpsichore, famous for a charade or a proverb. Jupiter liked to be amused in the evening. Bacchus also came, but finding that the Gods had not yet left their wine, retired to pay them a visit.

Ganymede announced coffee in the saloon of Juno. Jupiter was in superb good humour. He was amused

by his mortal guest. He had condescended to tell one of his best stories in his best style, about Leda, not too scandalous, but gay.

'Those were bright days,' said Neptune.

'We can remember,' said the Thunderer, with a twinkling eye. 'These youths have fallen upon duller times. There are no fine women now. Ixion, I drink to the health of your wife.'

'With all my heart, and may we never be nearer than we are at present.'

'Good! i'faith; Apollo, your arm. Now for the ladies. La, la, la, la! la, la, la, la!'

The Thunderer entered the saloon of Juno with that bow which no God could rival; all rose, and the King of Heaven seated himself between Ceres and Latona. The melancholy Apollo stood apart, and was soon carried off by Minerva to an assembly at the house of Mnemosyne. Mercury chatted with the Graces, and Bacchus with Diana. The three Muses favoured the company with singing, and the Queen of Heaven approached Ixion.

'Does your Majesty dance?' she haughtily inquired.

'On earth; I have few accomplishments even there, and none in Heaven.'

'You have led a strange life! I have heard of your adventures.'

'A king who has lost his crown may generally gain at least experience.'

'Your courage is firm.'

'I have felt too much to care for much. Yesterday I was a vagabond exposed to every pitiless storm, and now I am the guest of Jove. While there is life there is hope, and he who laughs at Destiny

will gain Fortune. I would go through the past again to enjoy the present, and feel that, after all, I am my wife's debtor, since, through her conduct, I can gaze upon you.'

'No great spectacle. If that be all. I wish you better fortune.'

'I desire no greater.'

'You are moderate.'

'I am perhaps more unreasonable than you imagine.'

'Indeed!'

Their eyes met; the dark orbs of the Thessalian did not quail before the flashing vision of the Goddess. Juno grew pale. Juno turned away.

PART II.

'Others say it was only a cloud.'

A Mortal Among the Gods.

ERCURY and Ganymede were each lolling on an opposite couch in the antechamber of Olympus.

'It is wonderful,' said the son of Maia, yawning.

'It is incredible,' rejoined the cup-bearer of Jove, stretching his legs.

'A miserable mortal!' exclaimed the God, elevating his eyebrows.

'A vile Thessalian!' said the beautiful Phrygian, shrugging his shoulders.

'Not three days back an outcast among his own wretched species!'

'And now commanding everybody in Heaven.'

'He shall not command me, though,' said Mercury.

'Will he not?' replied Ganymede. 'Why, what do you think? only last night; hark! here he comes.'

The companions jumped up from their couches; a light laugh was heard. The cedar portal was flung open, and Ixion lounged in, habited in a loose morning robe, and kicking before him one of his slippers.

'Ah!' exclaimed the King of Thessaly, 'the very fellows I wanted to see! Ganymede, bring me some nectar; and, Mercury, run and tell Jove that I shall not dine at home to-day.'

The messenger and the page exchanged looks of indignant consternation.

'Well! what are you waiting for?' continued Ixion, looking round from the mirror in which he was arranging his locks. The messenger and the page disappeared.

'So! this is Heaven,' exclaimed the husband of Dia, flinging himself upon one of the couches; 'and a very pleasant place too. These worthy Immortals required their minds to be opened, and I trust I have effectually performed the necessary operation. They wanted to keep me down with their dull old-fashioned celestial airs, but I fancy I have given them change for their talent. To make your way in Heaven you must command. These exclusives sink under the audacious invention of an aspiring mind. Jove himself is really a fine old fellow, with some notions too. I am a prime favourite, and no one is greater authority with Ægiochus on all subjects, from the character of the fair sex or the pedigree of a courser, down to the cut of a robe or the flavour of a dish. Thanks, Ganymede,' continued the Thessalian, as he took the goblet from his returning attendant.

'I drink to your *bonnes fortunes*. Splendid! This nectar makes me feel quite immortal. By-the-bye, I hear sweet sounds. Who is in the Hall of Music?'

'The Goddesses, royal sir, practise a new air of Euterpe, the words by Apollo. 'Tis pretty, and will doubtless be very popular, for it is all about moonlight and the misery of existence.'

'I warrant it.'

'You have a taste for poetry yourself?' inquired Ganymede.

'Not the least,' replied Ixion.

'Apollo,' continued the heavenly page, 'is a great genius, though Marsyas said that he never would be a poet because he was a God, and had no heart. But do you think, sir, that a poet does indeed need a heart?'

'I really cannot say. I know my wife always said I had a bad heart and worse head; but what she meant, upon my honour I never could understand.'

'Minerva will ask you to write in her album.'

'Will she indeed! I am sorry to hear it, for I can scarcely scrawl my signature. I should think that Jove himself cared little for all this nonsense.'

'Jove loves an epigram. He does not esteem Apollo's works at all. Jove is of the classical school, and admires satire, provided there be no allusions to Gods and kings.'

'Of course; I quite agree with him. I remember we had a confounded poet at Larissa who proved my family lived before the deluge, and asked me for a pension. I refused him, and then he wrote an epigram asserting that I sprang from the veritable stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha at the repeopling of the earth, and retained all the properties of my ancestors.'

'Ha, ha! Hark! there's a thunderbolt! I must run to Jove.'

'And I will look in on the musicians. This way, I think?'

'Up the ruby staircase, turn to your right, down the amethyst gallery. Farewell!'

'Good-bye; a lively lad that!'

The King of Thessaly entered the Hall of Music with its golden walls and crystal dome. The Queen of Heaven was reclining in an easy chair, cutting out peacocks in small sheets of note paper. Minerva was making a pencil observation on a manuscript copy of the song: Apollo listened with deference to her laudatory criticisms. Another divine dame, standing by the side of Euterpe, who was seated by the harp, looked up as Ixion entered. The wild liquid glance of her soft but radiant countenance denoted the famed Goddess of Beauty.

Juno just acknowledged the entrance of Ixion by a slight and haughty inclination of the head, and then resumed her employment. Minerva asked him his opinion of her amendment, of which he greatly approved. Apollo greeted him with a melancholy smile, and congratulated him on being mortal. Venus complimented him on his visit to Olympus, and expressed the pleasure that she experienced in making his acquaintance.

'What do you think of Heaven?' inquired Venus, in a soft still voice, and with a smile like summer lightning.

'I never found it so enchanting as at this moment,' replied Ixion.

'A little dull? For myself, I pass my time chiefly at Cnidos: you must come and visit me there. 'Tis the most charming place in the world. 'Tis said, you know, that our onions are like other people's

roses. We will take care of you, if your wife come.'

'No fear of that. She always remains at home and piques herself on her domestic virtues, which means pickling, and quarrelling with her husband.'

'Ah! I see you are a droll. Very good indeed. Well, for my part, I like a watering-place existence. Cnidos, Paphos, Cythera; you will usually find me at one of these places. I like the easy distraction of a career without any visible result. At these fascinating spots your gloomy race, to whom, by-the-bye, I am exceedingly partial, appear emancipated from the wearing fetters of their regular, dull, orderly, methodical, moral, political, toiling existence. I pride myself upon being the Goddess of watering-places. You really must pay me a visit at Cnidos.'

'Such an invitation requires no repetition. And Cnidos is your favourite spot?'

'Why, it was so; but of late it has become so inundated with invalid Asiatics and valetudinarian Persians, that the simultaneous influx of the handsome heroes who swarm in from the islands to look after their daughters, scarcely compensates for the annoying presence of their yellow faces and shaking limbs. No, I think, on the whole, Paphos is my favourite.'

'I have heard of its magnificent luxury.'

'Oh! 'tis lovely! Quite my idea of country life. Not a single tree! When Cyprus is very hot, you run to Paphos for a sea-breeze, and are sure to meet every one whose presence is in the least desirable. All the bores remain behind, as if by instinct.'

'I remember when we married, we talked of passing the honeymoon at Cythera, but Dia would have

her waiting-maid and a bandbox stuffed between us in the chariot, so I got sulky after the first stage, and returned by myself.'

'You were quite right. I hate bandboxes: they are always in the way. You would have liked Cythera if you had been in the least in love. High rocks and green knolls, bowery woods, winding walks, and delicious sunsets. I have not been there much of late,' continued the Goddess, looking somewhat sad and serious, 'since — but I will not talk sentiment to Ixion.'

'Do you think, then, I am insensible?'

'Yes.'

'Perhaps you are right. We mortals grow callous.'

'So I have heard. How very odd!' So saying, the Goddess glided away and saluted Mars, who at that moment entered the hall. Ixion was presented to the military hero, who looked fierce and bowed stiffly. The King of Thessaly turned upon his heel. Minerva opened her album, and invited him to inscribe a stanza.

'Goddess of Wisdom,' replied the King, 'unless you inspire me, the virgin page must remain pure as thyself. I can scarcely sign a decree.'

'Is it Ixion of Thessaly who says this; one who has seen so much, and, if I am not mistaken, has felt and thought so much? I can easily conceive why such a mind may desire to veil its movements from the common herd, but pray concede to Minerva the gratifying compliment of assuring her that she is the exception for whom this rule has been established.'

'I seem to listen to the inspired music of an oracle. Give me a pen,'

'Here is one, plucked from a sacred owl.'

'So! I write. There! Will it do?'

Minerva read the inscription:—

I HAVE SEEN THE WORLD, AND MORE THAN THE WORLD: I HAVE STUDIED THE HEART OF MAN, AND NOW I CONSORT WITH IMMORTALS. THE FRUIT OF MY TREE OF KNOWLEDGE IS PLUCKED, AND IT IS THIS, **'Adventures are to the Adventurous.'**

Written in the Album of Minerva, by

Ixion in Heaven.

''Tis brief,' said the Goddess, with a musing air, 'but full of meaning. You have a daring soul and pregnant mind.'

'I have dared much: what I may produce we have yet to see.'

'I must to Jove,' said Minerva, 'to council. We shall meet again. Farewell, Ixion.'

'Farewell, Glaucopis.'

The King of Thessaly stood away from the remaining guests, and leant with folded arms and pensive brow against a wreathed column. Mars listened to Venus with an air of deep devotion. Euterpe played an inspiring accompaniment to their conversation. The Queen of Heaven seemed engrossed in the creation of her paper peacocks.

Ixion advanced and seated himself on a couch near Juno. His manner was divested of that reckless bearing and careless coolness by which it was in general distinguished. He was, perhaps, even a little embarrassed. His ready tongue deserted him. At length he spoke.

'Has your Majesty ever heard of the peacock of the Queen of Mesopotamia?'

'No,' replied Juno, with stately reserve; and then she added with an air of indifferent curiosity, 'Is it in any way remarkable?'

'Its breast is of silver, its wings of gold, its eyes of carbuncle, its claws of amethyst.'

'And its tail?' eagerly inquired Juno.

'That is a secret,' replied Ixion. 'The tail is the most wonderful part of all.'

'Oh! tell me, pray tell me!'

'I forget.'

'No, no, no; it is impossible!' exclaimed the animated Juno. 'Provoking mortal!' continued the Goddess. 'Let me entreat you; tell me immediately.'

'There is a reason which prevents me.'

'What can it be? How very odd! What reason can it possibly be? Now tell me; as a particular, a personal favour, I request you, do tell me.'

'What! The tail or the reason? The tail is wonderful, but the reason is much more so. I can only tell one. Now choose.'

'What provoking things these human beings are! The tail is wonderful, but the reason is much more so. Well then, the reason; no, the tail. Stop, now, as a particular favour, pray tell me both. What can the tail be made of and what can the reason be? I am literally dying of curiosity.'

'Your Majesty has cut out that peacock wrong,' remarked Ixion. 'It is more like one of Minerva's owls.'

'Who cares about paper peacocks, when the Queen of Mesopotamia has got such a miracle!' exclaimed Juno; and she tore the labours of the morning to pieces, and threw away the fragments with

vexation. 'Now tell me instantly; if you have the slightest regard for me, tell me instantly. What was the tail made of?'

'And you do not wish to hear the reason?'

'That afterwards. Now! I am all ears.' At this moment Ganymede entered, and whispered the Goddess, who rose in evident vexation, and retired to the presence of Jove.

The King of Thessaly quitted the Hall of Music. Moody, yet not uninfluenced by a degree of wild excitement, he wandered forth into the gardens of Olympus. He came to a beautiful green retreat surrounded by enormous cedars, so vast that it seemed they must have been coeval with the creation; so fresh and brilliant, you would have deemed them wet with the dew of their first spring. The turf, softer than down, and exhaling, as you pressed it, an exquisite perfume, invited him to recline himself upon this natural couch. He threw himself upon the aromatic herbage, and leaning on his arm, fell into a deep reverie.

Hours flew away; the sunshiny glades that opened in the distance had softened into shade.

'Ixion, how do you do?' inquired a voice, wild, sweet, and thrilling as a bird. The King of Thessaly started and looked up with the distracted air of a man roused from a dream, or from complacent meditation over some strange, sweet secret. His cheek was flushed, his dark eyes flashed fire; his brow trembled, his dishevelled hair played in the fitful breeze. The King of Thessaly looked up, and beheld a most beautiful youth.

Apparently, he had attained about the age of puberty. His stature, however, was rather tall for his

age, but exquisitely moulded and proportioned. Very fair, his somewhat round cheeks were tinted with a rich but delicate glow, like the rose of twilight, and lighted by dimples that twinkled like stars. His large and deep-blue eyes sparkled with exultation, and an air of ill-suppressed mockery quivered round his pouting lips. His light auburn hair, braided off his white forehead, clustered in massy curls on each side of his face, and fell in sunny torrents down his neck. And from the back of the beautiful youth there fluttered forth two wings, the tremulous plumage of which seemed to have been bathed in a sunset: so various, so radiant, and so novel were its shifting and wondrous tints; purple, and crimson, and gold; streaks of azure, dashes of orange and glossy black; now a single feather, whiter than light, and sparkling like the frost, stars of emerald and carbuncle, and then the prismatic blaze of an enormous brilliant! A quiver hung at the side of the beautiful youth, and he leant upon a bow.

'Oh! God, for God thou must be!' at length exclaimed Ixion. 'Do I behold the bright divinity of Love?'

'I am indeed Cupid,' replied the youth; 'and am curious to know what Ixion is thinking about.'

'Thought is often bolder than speech.'

'Oracular, though a mortal! You need not be afraid to trust me. My aid I am sure you must need. Who ever was found in a reverie on the green turf, under the shade of spreading trees, without requiring the assistance of Cupid? Come! be frank, who is the heroine? Some love-sick nymph deserted on the far earth; or worse, some treacherous mistress, whose frailty is more easily forgotten than

her charms? 'Tis a miserable situation, no doubt. It cannot be your wife?'

'Assuredly not,' replied Ixion, with energy.

'Another man's?'

'No.'

'What! an obdurate maiden?'

Ixion shook his head.

'It must be a widow, then,' continued Cupid. 'Who ever heard before of such a piece of work about a widow!'

'Have pity upon me, dread Cupid!' exclaimed the King of Thessaly, rising suddenly from the ground, and falling on his knee before the God. 'Thou art the universal friend of man, and all nations alike throw their incense on thy altars. Thy divine discrimination has not deceived thee. I *am* in love; desperately, madly, fatally enamoured. The object of my passion is neither my own wife nor another man's. In spite of all they have said and sworn, I am a moral member of society. She is neither a maid nor a widow. She is——'

'What? what?' exclaimed the impatient deity.

'A Goddess!' replied the King.

'Wheugh!' whistled Cupid. 'What! has my mischievous mother been indulging you with an innocent flirtation?'

'Yes; but it produced no effect upon me.'

'You have a stout heart, then. Perhaps you have been reading poetry with Minerva, and are caught in one of her Platonic man-traps.'

'She set one, but I broke away.'

'You have a stout leg, then. But where are you, where are you? Is it Hebe? It can hardly be Diana, she is so cold. Is it a Muse, or is it one of the Graces?'

Ixion again shook his head.

'Come, my dear fellow,' said Cupid, quite in a confidential tone, 'you have told enough to make further reserve mere affectation. Ease your heart at once, and if I can assist you, depend upon my exertions.'

'Beneficent God!' exclaimed Ixion, 'if I ever return to Larissa, the brightest temple in Greece shall hail thee for its inspiring deity. I address thee with all the confiding frankness of a devoted votary. Know, then, the heroine of my reverie was no less a personage than the Queen of Heaven herself!'

'Juno! by all that is sacred!' shouted Cupid.

'I am here,' responded a voice of majestic melody. The stately form of the Queen of Heaven advanced from a neighbouring bower. Ixion stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground, with a throbbing heart and burning cheeks. Juno stood motionless, pale, and astounded. The God of Love burst into excessive laughter.

'A pretty pair!' he exclaimed, fluttering between both, and laughing in their faces. 'Truly a pretty pair! Well! I see I am in your way. Good-bye!' And so saying, the God pulled a couple of arrows from his quiver, and with the rapidity of lightning shot one in the respective breasts of the Queen of Heaven and the King of Thessaly.

The amethystine twilight of Olympus died away. The stars blazed with tints of every hue. Ixion and Juno returned to the palace. She leant upon his arm; her eyes were fixed upon the ground; they were in sight of the gorgeous pile, and yet she had not spoken. Ixion, too, was silent, and gazed with abstraction upon the glowing sky.

Suddenly, when within a hundred yards of the portal, Juno stopped, and looking up into the face of Ixion with an irresistible smile, she said, 'I am sure you cannot now refuse to tell me what the Queen of Mesopotamia's peacock's tail was made of!'

'It is impossible now,' said Ixion. 'Know, then, beautiful Goddess, that the tail of the Queen of Mesopotamia's peacock was made of some plumage she had stolen from the wings of Cupid.'

'And what was the reason that prevented you from telling me before?'

'Because, beautiful Juno, I am the most discreet of men, and respect the secret of a lady, however trifling.'

'I am glad to hear that,' replied Juno, and they re-entered the palace.

Mercury met Juno and Ixion in the gallery leading to the grand banqueting hall.

'I was looking for you,' said the God, shaking his head. 'Jove is in a sublime rage. Dinner has been ready this hour.'

The King of Thessaly and the Queen of Heaven exchanged a glance and entered the saloon. Jove looked up with a brow of thunder, but did not condescend to send forth a single flash of anger. Jove looked up and Jove looked down. All Olympus trembled as the Father of Gods and men resumed his soup. The rest of the guests seemed nervous and reserved, except Cupid, who said immediately to Juno, 'Your Majesty has been detained?'

'I fell asleep in a bower reading Apollo's last poem,' replied Juno. 'I am lucky, however, in finding a companion in my negligence. Ixion, where have you been?'

'Take a glass of nectar, Juno,' said Cupid, with eyes twinkling with mischief; 'and perhaps Ixion will join us.'

This was the most solemn banquet ever celebrated in Olympus. Everyone seemed out of humour or out of spirits. Jupiter spoke only in monosyllables of suppressed rage, that sounded like distant thunder.

Apollo whispered to Minerva. Mercury never opened his lips, but occasionally exchanged significant glances with Ganymede. Mars compensated, by his attentions to Venus, for his want of conversation. Cupid employed himself in asking disagreeable questions. At length the Goddesses retired. Mercury exerted himself to amuse Jove, but the Thunderer scarcely deigned to smile at his best stories. Mars picked his teeth, Apollo played with his rings, Ixion was buried in a profound reverie.

It was a great relief to all when Ganymede summoned them to the presence of their late companions.

'I have written a comment upon your inscription,' said Minerva to Ixion, 'and am anxious for your opinion of it.'

'I am a wretched critic,' said the King, breaking away from her. Juno smiled upon him in the distance.

'Ixion,' said Venus, as he passed by, 'come and talk to me.'

The bold Thessalian blushed, he stammered out an unmeaning excuse, he quitted the astonished but good-natured Goddess, and seated himself by Juno, and as he seated himself his moody brow seemed suddenly illumined with brilliant light.

'Is it so?' said Venus.

'Hem!' said Minerva.

'Ha, ha!' said Cupid.

Jupiter played piquette with Mercury.

'Everything goes wrong to-day,' said the King of Heaven; 'cards wretched, and kept waiting for dinner, and by——a mortal!'

'Your Majesty must not be surprised,' said the good-natured Mercury, with whom Ixion was no favourite. 'Your Majesty must not be very much surprised at the conduct of this creature. Considering what he is, and where he is, I am only astonished that his head is not more turned than it appears to be. A man, a thing made of mud, and in Heaven! Only think, sire! Is it not enough to inflame the brain of any child of clay? To be sure, keeping your Majesty from dinner is little short of celestial high treason. I hardly expected that, indeed. To order me about, to treat Ganymede as his own lacquey, and, in short, to command the whole household; all this might be expected from such a person in such a situation, but I confess I did think he had some little respect left for your Majesty.'

'And he does order you about, eh?' inquired Jove. 'I have the spades.'

'Oh! 'tis quite ludicrous,' responded the son of Maia. 'Your Majesty would not expect from me the offices that this upstart daily requires.'

'Eternal destiny! is't possible? That is my trick. And Ganymede, too?'

'Oh! quite shocking, I assure you, sire,' said the beautiful cupbearer, leaning over the chair of Jove with all the easy insolence of a privileged favourite. 'Really, sire, if Ixion is to go on in the way he does, either he or I must quit.'

'Is it possible?' exclaimed Jupiter. 'But I can

believe anything of a man who keeps me waiting for dinner. Two and three make five.'

'It is Juno that encourages him so,' said Ganymede.

'Does she encourage him?' inquired Jove.

'Everybody notices it,' protested Ganymede.

'It is indeed a little noticed,' observed Mercury.

'What business has such a fellow to speak to Juno?' exclaimed Jove. 'A mere mortal, a mere miserable mortal! You have the point. How I have been deceived in this fellow! Who ever could have supposed that, after all my generosity to him, he would ever have kept me waiting for dinner?'

'He was walking with Juno,' said Ganymede. 'It was all a sham about their having met by accident. Cupid saw them.'

'Ha!' said Jupiter, turning pale; 'you don't say so! Repiqued, as I am a God. That is mine. Where is the Queen?'

'Talking to Ixion, sire,' said Mercury. 'Oh, I beg your pardon, sire; I did not know you meant the queen of diamonds.'

'Never mind. I am repiqued, and I have been kept waiting for dinner. Accursed be this day! Is Ixion really talking to Juno? We will not endure this.'

'Where is Juno?' demanded Jupiter.

'I am sure I cannot say,' said Venus, with a smile.

'I am sure I do not know,' said Minerva, with a sneer.

'Where is Ixion?' said Cupid, laughing outright.

'Mercury, Ganymede, find the Queen of Heaven instantly,' thundered the Father of Gods and men.

The celestial messenger and the heavenly page flew away out of different doors. There was a terrible, an immortal silence. Sublime rage lowered on the brow of Jove like a storm upon the mountain-top. Minerva seated herself at the card-table and played at Patience. Venus and Cupid tittered in the background. Shortly returned the envoys, Mercury looking solemn, Ganymede malignant.

'Well?' inquired Jove; and all Olympus trembled at the monosyllable.

Mercury shook his head.

'Her Majesty has been walking on the terrace with the King of Thessaly,' replied Ganymede.

'Where is she now, sir?' demanded Jupiter.

Mercury shrugged his shoulders.

'Her Majesty is resting herself in the pavilion of Cupid, with the King of Thessaly,' replied Ganymede.

'Confusion!' exclaimed the Father of Gods and men; and he rose and seized a candle from the table, scattering the cards in all directions. Every one present, Minerva and Venus, and Mars and Apollo, and Mercury and Ganymede, and the Muses, and the Graces, and all the winged genii — each seized a candle; rifling the chandeliers, each followed Jove.

'This way,' said Mercury.

'This way,' said Ganymede.

'This way, this way!' echoed the celestial crowd.

'Mischief!' cried Cupid; 'I must save my victims.'

They were all upon the terrace. The Father of Gods and men, though both in a passion and a hurry, moved with dignity. It was, as customary in Heaven, a clear and starry night; but this eve Diana was

indisposed, or otherwise engaged, and there was no moonlight. They were in sight of the pavilion.

'What are you?' inquired Cupid of one of the genii, who accidentally extinguished his candle.

'I am a cloud,' answered the winged genius.

'A cloud! Just the thing. Now do me a shrewd turn, and Cupid is ever your debtor. Fly, fly, pretty cloud, and encompass yon pavilion with your form. Away! ask no questions; swift as my word.'

'I declare there is a fog,' said Venus.

'An evening mist in Heaven!' said Minerva.

'Where is Nox?' said Jove. 'Everything goes wrong. Who ever heard of a mist in Heaven?'

'My candle is out,' said Apollo.

'And mine, too,' said Mars.

'And mine, and mine, and mine,' said Mercury and Ganymede, and the Muses and the Graces.

'All the candles are out!' said Cupid; 'a regular fog. I cannot even see the pavilion: it must be hereabouts, though,' said the God to himself. 'So, so; I should be at home in my own pavilion, and am tolerably accustomed to stealing about in the dark. There is a step; and here, surely, is the lock. The door opens, but the cloud enters before me. Juno, Juno,' whispered the God of Love, 'we are all here. Be contented to escape, like many other innocent dames, with your reputation only under a cloud: it will soon disperse; and lo! the heaven is clearing.'

'It must have been the heat of our flambeaux,' said Venus; 'for see, the mist is vanished; here is the pavilion.'

Ganymede ran forward, and dashed open the door. Ixion was alone.

'Seize him!' said Jove.

'Juno is not here,' said Mercury, with an air of blended congratulation and disappointment.

'Never mind,' said Jove; 'seize him! He kept me waiting for dinner.'

'Is this your hospitality, Ægiochus?' exclaimed Ixion, in a tone of bullying innocence. 'I shall defend myself.'

'Seize him, seize him!' exclaimed Jupiter. 'What! do you all falter? Are you afraid of a mortal?'

'And a Thessalian?' added Ganymede.

No one advanced.

'Send for Hercules,' said Jove.

'I will fetch him in an instant,' said Ganymede.

'I protest,' said the King of Thessaly, 'against this violation of the most sacred rights.'

'The marriage tie?' said Mercury.

'The dinner-hour?' said Jove.

'It is no use talking sentiment to Ixion,' said Venus; 'all mortals are callous.'

'Adventures are to the adventurous,' said Minerva.

'Here is Hercules! here is Hercules!'

'Seize him!' said Jove; 'seize that man.'

In vain the mortal struggled with the irresistible demigod.

'Shall I fetch your thunderbolt, Jove?' inquired Ganymede.

'Anything short of eternal punishment is unworthy of a God,' answered Jupiter, with great dignity. 'Apollo, bring me a wheel of your chariot.'

'What shall I do to-morrow morning?' inquired the God of Light.

'Order an eclipse,' replied Jove. 'Bind the insolent wretch to the wheel; hurl him to Hades; its motion shall be perpetual.'

'What am I to bind him with?' inquired Hercules.

'The girdle of Venus,' replied the Thunderer.

'What is all this?' inquired Juno, advancing, pale and agitated.

'Come along; you shall see,' answered Jupiter. 'Follow me, follow me.'

They all followed the leader, all the Gods, all the genii; in the midst, the brawny husband of Hebe bearing Ixion aloft, bound to the fatal wheel. They reached the terrace; they descended the sparkling steps of lapis-lazuli. Hercules held his burthen on high, ready, at a nod, to plunge the hapless but presumptuous mortal through space into Hades. The heavenly group surrounded him, and peeped over the starry abyss. It was a fine moral, and demonstrated the usual infelicity that attends unequal connection.

'Celestial despot!' said Ixion.

In a moment all sounds were hushed, as they listened to the last words of the unrivalled victim. Juno, in despair, leant upon the respective arms of Venus and Minerva.

'Celestial despot!' said Ixion, 'I defy the immortal ingenuity of thy cruelty. My memory must be as eternal as thy torture: that will support me.'

THE RISE OF ISKANDER

THE RISE OF ISKANDER

CHAPTER I.

The Stranger.

HE sun had set behind the mountains, and the rich plain of Athens was suffused with the violet glow of a Grecian eve. A light breeze rose; the olive groves awoke from their noonday trance, and rustled with returning animation, and the pennons of the Turkish squadron, that lay at anchor in the harbour of Piræus, twinkled in the lively air. From one gate of the city the women came forth in procession to the fountain; from another, a band of sumptuous horsemen sallied out, and threw their wanton javelins in the invigorating sky, as they galloped over the plain. The voice of birds, the buzz of beauteous insects, the breath of fragrant flowers, the quivering note of the nightingale, the pittering call of the grasshopper, and the perfume of the violet, shrinking from the embrace of the twilight breeze, filled the purple air with music and with odour.

A solitary being stood upon the towering crag of the Acropolis, amid the ruins of the Temple of Minerva, and gazed upon the inspiring scene. Around him rose the matchless memorials of antique art; immortal columns whose symmetry baffles modern proportion, serene Caryatides, bearing with greater grace a graceful burthen, carvings of delicate precision, and friezes breathing with heroic life. Apparently the stranger, though habited as a Moslem, was not insensible to the genius of the locality, nor indeed would his form and countenance have misbecome a contemporary of Pericles and Phidias. In the prime of life, and far above the common stature, but with a frame the muscular power of which was even exceeded by its almost ideal symmetry, his high white forehead, his straight profile, his oval countenance, and his curling lip, exhibited the same visage that had inspired the sculptor of the surrounding demigods.

The dress of the stranger, although gorgeous, was, however, certainly not classic. A crimson shawl was wound round his head, and glittered with a trembling aigrette of diamonds. His vest, which set tight to his form, was of green velvet, richly embroidered with gold and pearls. Over this he wore a light jacket of crimson velvet, equally embroidered, and lined with sable. He wore also the full white camese common among the Albanians; and while his feet were protected by sandals, the lower part of his legs was guarded by greaves of embroidered green velvet. From a broad belt of scarlet leather peeped forth the jewelled hilts of a variety of daggers, and by his side was an enormous scimitar, in a scabbard of chased silver.

The stranger gazed upon the wide prospect before him with an air of pensive abstraction. 'Beautiful Greece,' he exclaimed, 'thou art still my country. A mournful lot is mine, a strange and mournful lot, yet not uncheered by hope. I am at least a warrior; and this arm, though trained to war against thee, will not well forget, in the quick hour of battle, the blood that flows within it. Themistocles saved Greece and died a Satrap: I am bred one, let me reverse our lots, and die at least a patriot.'

At this moment the Evening Hymn to the Virgin arose from a neighbouring convent. The stranger started as the sacred melody floated towards him, and taking a small golden cross from his heart, he kissed it with devotion, and then descending the steep of the citadel, entered the city.

He proceeded along the narrow winding streets of Athens until he at length arrived in front of a marble palace, in the construction of which the architect had certainly not consulted the surrounding models which Time had spared to him, but which, however it might have offended a classic taste, presented altogether a magnificent appearance. Half-a-dozen guards, whose shields and helmets somewhat oddly contrasted with the two pieces of cannon, one of which was ostentatiously placed on each side of the portal, and which had been presented to the Prince of Athens by the Republic of Venice, lounged before the entrance, and paid their military homage to the stranger as he passed them. He passed them and entered a large quadrangular garden, surrounded by arcades, supported by a considerable number of thin, low pillars, of barbarous workmanship, and various-coloured marbles. In the midst of the garden rose a fountain, whence the

bubbling waters flowed in artificial channels through vistas of orange and lemon trees. By the side of the fountain on a luxurious couch, his eyes fixed upon a richly-illuminated volume, reposed Nicæus, the youthful Prince of Athens.

'Ah! is it you?' said the Prince, looking up with a smile, as the stranger advanced. 'You have arrived just in time to remind me that we must do something more than read the Persæ, we must act it.'

'My dear Nicæus,' replied the stranger, 'I have arrived only to bid you farewell.'

'Farewell!' exclaimed the Prince in a tone of surprise and sorrow; and he rose from the couch. 'Why! what is this?'

'It is too true,' said the stranger, and he led the way down one of the walks. 'Events have occurred which entirely baffle all our plans and prospects, and place me in a position as difficult as it is harrowing. Hunniades has suddenly crossed the Danube in great force, and carried everything before him. I am ordered to proceed to Albania instantly, and to repair to the camp at the head of the Epirots.'

'Indeed!' said Nicæus, with a thoughtful air. 'My letters did not prepare me for this. 'Tis sudden! Is Amurath himself in the field?'

'No; Karam Bey commands. I have accounted for my delay to the Sultan by pretended difficulties in our treaty, and have held out the prospect of a larger tribute.'

'When we are plotting that that tribute should be paid no longer!' added Nicæus, with a smile.

'Alas! my dear friend,' replied the Turkish commander, 'my situation has now become critical. Hitherto my services for the Moslemin have been con-

fined to acting against nations of their own faith. I am now suddenly summoned to combat against my secret creed, and the best allies of what I must yet call my secret country. The movement, it appears to me, must be made now or never, and I cannot conceal from myself, that it never could have been prosecuted under less auspicious circumstances.'

'What, you desponding!' exclaimed Nicæus; 'then I must despair. Your sanguine temper has alone supported me throughout all our dangerous hopes.'

'And Æschylus?' said the stranger, smiling.

'And Æschylus, certainly,' replied Nicæus; 'but I have lived to find even Æschylus insipid. I pant for action.'

'It may be nearer than we can foresee,' replied the stranger. 'There is a God who fashions all things. He will not desert a righteous cause. He knoweth that my thoughts are as pure as my situation is difficult. I have some dim ideas still brooding in my mind, but we will not discuss them now. I must away, dear Prince. The breeze serves fairly. Have you ever seen Hunniades?'

'I was educated at the Court of Transylvania,' replied Nicæus, looking down with a somewhat embarrassed air. 'He is a famous knight, Christendom's chief bulwark.'

The Turkish commander sighed. 'When we meet again,' he said, 'may we meet with brighter hopes and more buoyant spirits. At present, I must, indeed, say farewell.'

The Prince turned with a dejected countenance, and pressed his companion to his heart. ''Tis a sad end,' said he, 'to all our happy hours and lofty plans.'

'You are as yet too young to quarrel with fortune,' replied the stranger, 'and for myself, I have not yet settled my accounts with her. However, for the present, farewell, dear Nicæus!'

'Farewell,' replied the Prince of Athens, 'farewell, dear Iskander!'

CHAPTER II.

The Triumph of the Turk.

ISKANDER was the youngest son of the Prince of Epirus, who, with the other Grecian princes, had, at the commencement of the reign of Amurath the Second, in vain resisted the progress of the Turkish arms in Europe. The Prince of Epirus had obtained peace by yielding his four sons as hostages to the Turkish sovereign, who engaged that they should be educated in all the accomplishments of their rank, and with a due deference to their faith. On the death of the Prince of Epirus, however, Amurath could not resist the opportunity that then offered itself of adding to his empire the rich principality he had long coveted. A Turkish force instantly marched into Epirus, and seized upon Croia, the capital city, and the children of its late ruler were doomed to death. The beauty, talents, and valour of the youngest son, saved him, however, from the fate of his poisoned brothers. Iskander was educated at Adrianople, in the Moslem faith, and as he, at a very early age, excelled in feats of arms all the Moslemin warriors, he became a prime favourite of the Sultan, and speedily rose in his service to the highest rank.

At this period the irresistible progress of the Turkish arms was the subject of alarm throughout all Christendom.

Constantinople, then the capital of the Greek Empire, had already been more than once besieged by the predecessors of Amurath, and had only been preserved by fortunate accidents and humiliating terms. The despots of Bosnia, Servia, and Bulgaria, and the Grecian princes of Etolia, Macedon, Epirus, Athens, Phocis, Bœotia, and indeed of all the regions to the straits of Corinth, were tributaries to Amurath, and the rest of Europe was only preserved from his grasp by the valour of the Hungarians and the Poles, whom a fortunate alliance had now united under the sovereignty of Uladislaus, who, incited by the pious eloquence of the cardinal of St. Angelo, the legate of the Pope, and, yielding to the tears and supplications of the despot of Servia, had, at the time our story opens, quitted Buda, at the head of a large army, crossed the Danube, and, joining his valiant viceroy, the famous John Hunniades, Vaivode of Transylvania, defeated the Turks with great slaughter, relieved Bulgaria, and pushed on to the base of Mount Hæmus, known in modern times as the celebrated Balkan. Here the Turkish general, Karam Bey, awaited the Christians, and hither to his assistance was Iskander commanded to repair at the head of a body of janissaries, who had accompanied him to Greece, and the tributary Epirots.

Had Iskander been influenced by vulgar ambition, his loftiest desires might have been fully gratified by the career which Amurath projected for him. The Turkish Sultan destined for the Grecian Prince the hand of one of his daughters, and the principal com-

mand of his armies. He lavished upon him the highest dignities and boundless wealth; and, whether it arose from a feeling of remorse, or of affection for a warrior whose unexampled valour and unrivalled skill had already added some of the finest provinces of Asia to his rule, it is certain that Iskander might have exercised over Amurath a far greater degree of influence than was enjoyed by any other of his courtiers. But the heart of Iskander responded with no sympathy to these flattering favours. His Turkish education could never eradicate from his memory the consciousness that he was a Greek; and although he was brought up in the Moslem faith, he had, at an early period of his career, secretly recurred to the creed of his Christian fathers. He beheld in Amurath the murderer of his dearest kinsmen, and the oppressor of his country; and although a certain calmness of temper, and coolness of judgment, which early developed themselves in his character, prevented him from ever giving any indication of his secret feelings, Iskander had long meditated on the exalted duty of freeing his country.

Dispatched to Greece, to arrange the tributes and the treaties of the Grecian princes, Iskander became acquainted with the young Nicæus; and their acquaintance soon matured into friendship. Nicæus was inexperienced; but nature had not intended him for action. The young Prince of Athens would loll by the side of a fountain, and dream of the wonders of old days. Surrounded by his eunuchs, his priests, and his courtiers, he envied Leonidas, and would have emulated Themistocles. He was passionately devoted to the ancient literature of his country, and had the good taste, rare at that time, to prefer Demosthenes and Lysias to Chrysostom and Gregory, and the choruses

of the Grecian theatre to the hymns of the Greek church. The sustained energy and noble simplicity of the character of Iskander, seemed to recall to the young Prince the classic heroes over whom he was so often musing, while the enthusiasm and fancy of Nicæus, and all that apparent weakness of will, and those quick vicissitudes of emotion, to which men of a fine susceptibility are subject, equally engaged the sympathy of the more vigourous and constant and experienced mind of his companion.

To Nicæus, Iskander had, for the first time in his life, confided much of his secret heart; and the young Prince fired at the inspiring tale. Often they consulted over the fortunes of their country, and, excited by their mutual invention, at length even dared to hope that they might effect its deliverance, when Iskander was summoned to the army. It was a mournful parting. Both of them felt that the last few months of their lives had owed many charms to their companionship. The parting of friends, united by sympathetic tastes, is always painful; and friends, unless this sympathy subsist, had much better never meet. Iskander stepped into the ship, sorrowful, but serene; Nicæus returned to his palace moody and fretful; lost his temper with his courtiers, and, when he was alone, even shed tears.

CHAPTER III.

Plots Against the Christians.

HREE weeks had elapsed since the parting of Iskander and Nicæus, when the former, at the head of ten thousand men, entered by a circuitous route the defiles of Mount Hæmus, and approached the Turkish camp, which had been pitched upon a vast and elevated table-ground, commanded on all sides by superior heights, which, however, were fortified and well-garrisoned by janissaries. The Epirots halted, and immediately prepared to raise their tents, while their commander, attended by a few of his officers, instantly proceeded to the pavilion of Karam Bey.

The arrival of Iskander diffused great joy among the soldiery; and as he passed through the encampment, the exclamations of the Turkish warriors announced how ready they were to be led to the charge by a chieftain who had been ever successful. A guard of honour, by the orders of Karam Bey, advanced to conduct Iskander to his presence; and soon, entering the pavilion, the Grecian Prince exchanged courtesies with the Turkish general. After the formal compliments had passed, Karam Bey waved his hand,

and the pavilion was cleared, with the exception of Mousa, the chief secretary, and favourite of Karam.

'You have arrived in good time, Iskander, to assist in the destruction of the Christian dogs,' said the Bey. 'Flushed with their accursed success, they have advanced too far. Twice they have endeavoured to penetrate the mountains; and each time they have been forced to retire, with great loss. The passages are well barricadoed with timber and huge fragments of rock. The dogs have lost all heart, and are sinking under the joint sufferings of hunger and cold. Our scouts tell me they exhibit symptoms of retreat. We must rush down from the mountains, and annihilate them.'

'Is Hunniades here in person?' inquired Iskander.

'He is here,' replied Karam, 'in person; the dog of dogs! Come, Iskander, his head would be a fine Ramadan present to Amurath. 'Tis a head worth three tails, I guess.'

Mousa, the chief secretary, indulged in some suppressed laughter at this joke. Iskander smiled.

'If they retreat we must assuredly attack them,' observed Iskander, musingly. 'I have a persuasion that Hunniades and myself will soon meet.'

'If there be truth in the Prophet!' exclaimed Karam. 'I have no doubt of it. Hunniades is reserved for you, Bey. We shall hold up our heads at court yet, Iskander. You have had letters lately?'

'Some slight words.'

'No mention of us, of course?'

'Nothing, except some passing praise of your valour and discretion.'

'We do our best, we do our best. Will Isa Bey have Ætolia, think you?'

'I have no thoughts. Our royal father will not forget his children, and Isa Bey is a most valiant chieftain.'

'You heard not that he was coming here?' inquired Karam.

'Have you?' responded the cautious Iskander.

'A rumour, a rumour,' replied Karam. 'He is at Adrianople, think you?'

'It may be so: I am, you know, from Athens.'

'True, true. We shall beat them, Iskander, we shall beat them.'

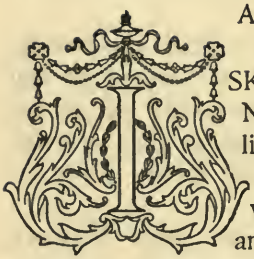
'For myself, I feel sanguine,' replied the Prince, and he arose to retire. 'I must at present to my men. We must ascertain more accurately the movements of the Christians before we decide on our own. I am inclined myself to reconnoitre them. How far may it be?'

'There is not room to form our array between them and the mountains,' replied Karam.

''Tis well. Success attend the true believers! By to-morrow's dawn we shall know more.'

CHAPTER IV.

A Ruse of War.



ISKANDER returned to his men. Night was coming on. Fires and lights blazed and sparkled in every direction. The air was clear, but very cold. He entered his tent, and muffling himself up in his pelisse of sables, he mounted his horse, and declining any attendance, rode for some little distance, until he had escaped from the precincts of the camp. Then he turned his horse towards one of the wildest passes of the mountain, and galloping at great speed, never stopped until he had gained a considerable ascent. The track became steep and rugged. The masses of loose stone rendered his progress slow; but his Anatolian charger still bore him at intervals bravely, and in three hours' time he had gained the summit of Mount Hæmus. A brilliant moon flooded the broad plains of Bulgaria with shadowy light. At the base of the mountainous range, the red watch-fires denoted the situation of the Christian camp.

Iskander proceeded down the descent with an audacious rapidity; but his charger was thoroughbred,

and his moments were golden. Ere midnight, he had reached the outposts of the enemy, and was challenged by a sentinel.

'Who goes there?'

'A friend to Christendom.'

'The word?'

'I have it not; nay, calmly. I am alone, but I am not unarmed. I do not know the word. I come from a far country, and bear important tidings to the great Hunniades; conduct me to that chief.'

'May I be crucified if I will,' responded the sentinel, 'before I know who and what you are. Come, keep off, unless you wish to try the effect of a Polish lance,' continued the sentinel; ''tis something, I assure you, not less awkward than your Greek fire, if Greek indeed you be.'

'My friend, you are a fool,' said Iskander, 'but time is too precious to argue any longer.' So saying, the Turkish commander dismounted, and taking up the brawny sentinel in his arms with the greatest ease, threw him over his shoulder, and threatening the astounded soldier with instant death if he struggled, covered him with his pelisse, and entered the camp.

They approached a watch-fire, around which several soldiers were warming themselves.

'Who goes there?' inquired a second sentinel.

'A friend to Christendom,' answered Iskander.

'The word?'

Iskander hesitated.

'The word, or I'll let fly,' said the sentinel, elevating his cross bow.

'The Bridge of Buda,' instantly replied the terrified prisoner beneath the pelisse of Iskander.

'Why did you not answer before, then?' said one of the guards.

'And why do you mock us by changing your voice?' said another. 'Come, get on with you, and no more jokes.'

Iskander proceeded through a street of tents, in some of which were lights, but all of which were silent. At length, he met the esquire of a Polish knight returning from a convivial meeting, not a little elevated.

'Who are you?' inquired Iskander.

'I am an esquire,' replied the gentleman.

'A shrewd man, I doubt not, who would make his fortune,' replied Iskander. 'You must know great things have happened. Being on guard I have taken a prisoner, who has deep secrets to divulge to the Lord Hunniades. Thither, to his pavilion, I am now bearing him. But he is a stout barbarian, and almost too much for me. Assist me in carrying him to the pavilion of Hunniades, and you shall have all the reward, and half the fame.'

'You are a very civil spoken young gentleman,' said the esquire. 'I think I know your voice. Your name, if I mistake not, is Leckinski?'

'A relative. We had a common ancestor.'

'I thought so. I know the Leckinskies ever by their voice. I am free to help you on the terms you mention, all the reward and half the fame. 'Tis a strong barbarian, is it? We cannot cut his throat, or it will not divulge. All the reward and half the fame! I will be a knight to-morrow. It seems a sort of fish, and has a smell.'

The esquire seized the shoulders of the prisoner, who would have spoken had he not been terrified by

the threats of Iskander, who, carrying the legs of the sentinel, allowed the Polish gentleman to lead the way to the pavilion of Hunniades. Thither they soon arrived; and Iskander, dropping his burthen, and leaving the prisoner without to the charge of his assistant, entered the pavilion of the General of the Hungarians.

He was stopped in a small outer apartment by an officer, who inquired his purpose, and to whom he repeated his desire to see the Hungarian leader, without loss of time, on important business. The officer hesitated; but, summoning several guards, left Iskander in their custody, and, stepping behind a curtain, disappeared. Iskander heard voices, but could distinguish no words. Soon the officer returned, and, ordering the guards to disarm and search Iskander, directed the Grecian Prince to follow him. Drawing aside the curtain, Iskander and his attendant entered a low apartment of considerable size. It was hung with skins. A variety of armour and dresses were piled on couches. A middle-aged man, of majestic appearance, muffled in a pelisse of furs, with long chestnut hair, and a cap of crimson velvet and ermine, was walking up and down the apartment, and dictating some instructions to a person who was kneeling on the ground, and writing by the bright flame of a brazen lamp. The bright flame of the blazing lamp fell full upon the face of the secretary. Iskander beheld a most beautiful woman.

She looked up as Iskander entered. Her large dark eyes glanced through his soul. Her raven hair descended to her shoulders in many curls on each side of her face, and was braided with strings of immense pearls. A broad cap of white fox-skin crowned her

whiter forehead. Her features were very small, but sharply moulded, and a delicate tint gave animation to her clear fair cheek. She looked up as Iskander entered, with an air rather of curiosity than embarrassment.

Hunniades stopped, and examined his visitor with a searching inquisition. 'Whence come you?' inquired the Hungarian chieftain.

'From the Turkish camp,' was the answer.

'An envoy or a deserter?'

'Neither.'

'What then?'

'A convert.'

'Your name?'

'Lord Hunniades,' said Iskander, 'that is for your private ear. I am unarmed, and were I otherwise, the first knight of Christendom can scarcely fear. I am one in birth and rank your equal; if not in fame, at least, I trust, in honour. My time is all precious: I can scarcely stay here while my horse breathes. Dismiss your attendant.'

Hunniades darted a glance at his visitor which would have baffled a weaker brain, but Iskander stood the scrutiny calm and undisturbed. 'Go, Stanislaus,' said the Vaivode to the officer. 'This lady, sir,' continued the chieftain, 'is my daughter, and one from whom I have no secrets.'

Iskander bowed lowly as the officer disappeared.

'And now,' said Hunniades, 'to business. Your purpose?'

'I am a Grecian Prince, and a compulsory ally of the Moslemin. In a word, my purpose here is to arrange a plan by which we may effect, at the same time, your triumph and my freedom.'

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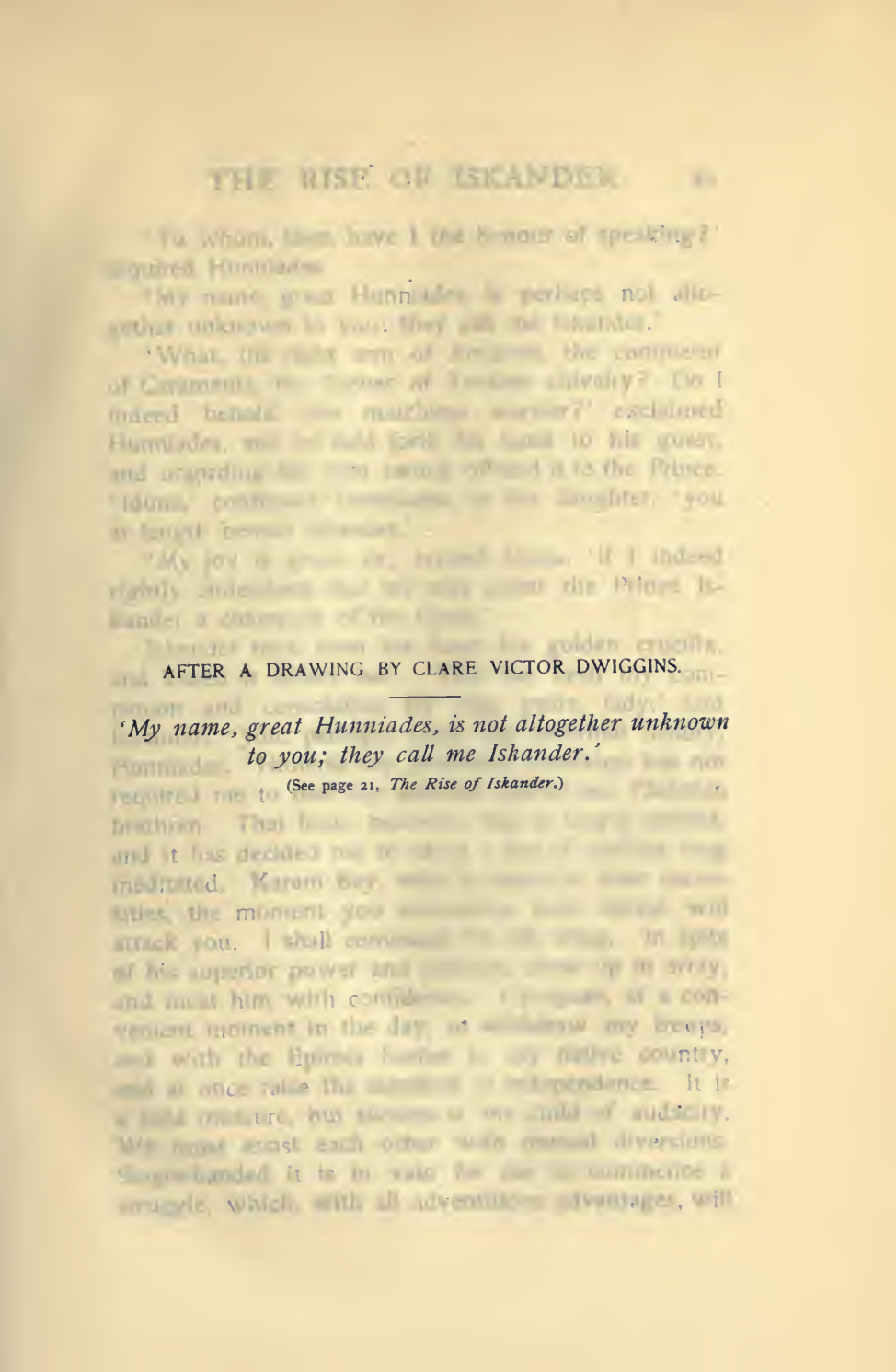


AFTER A DRAWING BY CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS.

'My name, great Hunniades, is not altogether unknown to you; they call me Iskander.'

(See page 21, *The Rise of Iskander.*)

'To whom, then, have I the honour of speaking?' inquired Hunniades.

'My name, great Hunniades, is perhaps not altogether unknown to you: they call me Iskander.'

'What, the right arm of Amurath, the conqueror of Caramania, the flower of Turkish chivalry? Do I indeed behold that matchless warrior?' exclaimed Hunniades, and he held forth his hand to his guest, and ungirding his own sword, offered it to the Prince. 'Iduna,' continued Hunniades, to his daughter, 'you at length behold Iskander.'

'My joy is great, sir,' replied Iduna, 'if I indeed rightly understand that we may count the Prince Iskander a champion of the Cross.'

Iskander took from his heart his golden crucifix, and kissed it before her. 'This has been my companion and consolation for long years, lady,' said Iskander; 'you, perhaps, know my mournful history, Hunniades. Hitherto my pretended sovereign has not required me to bare my scimitar against my Christian brethren. That hour, however, has at length arrived, and it has decided me to adopt a line of conduct long meditated. Karam Bey, who is aware of your necessities, the moment you commence your retreat, will attack you. I shall command his left wing. In spite of his superior power and position, draw up in array, and meet him with confidence. I propose, at a convenient moment in the day, to withdraw my troops, and with the Epirots hasten to my native country, and at once raise the standard of independence. It is a bold measure, but success is the child of audacity. We must assist each other with mutual diversions. Single-handed it is in vain for me to commence a struggle, which, with all adventitious advantages, will

require the utmost exertion of energy, skill, and patience. But if yourself and the King Uladislaus occupy the armies of Amurath in Bulgaria, I am not without hope of ultimate success, since I have to inspire me all the most urgent interests of humanity, and combat, at the same time, for my God, my country, and my lawful crown.'

'Brave Prince, I pledge you my troth,' said Hunniades, coming forward and seizing his hand; 'and while Iskander and Hunniades live, they will never cease until they have achieved their great and holy end.'

'It is a solemn compact,' said Iskander, 'more sacred than if registered by all the scribes of Christendom. Lady Iduna, your prayers!'

'They are ever with the champions of the Cross,' replied the daughter of Hunniades. She rose, the large cloak in which she was enveloped fell from her exquisite form. 'Noble Iskander, this rosary is from the Holy Sepulchre,' continued Iduna; 'wear it for the sake and memory of that blessed Saviour who died for our sins.'

Iskander held forth his arm and touched her delicate hand as he received the rosary, which, pressing to his lips, he placed round his neck.

'Great Hunniades,' said the Grecian Prince, 'I must cross the mountains before dawn. Let me venture to entreat that we should hear to-morrow that the Christian camp is in retreat.'

'Let it even be so,' said the Hungarian, after some thought, 'and may to-morrow's sun bring brighter days to Christendom.' And with these words terminated the brief and extraordinary visit of Iskander to the Christian general.

CHAPTER V.

'All Who Love Their Country, Follow Me!'

HE intelligence of the breaking up of the Christian camp, and the retreat of the Christian army, soon reached the Divan of Karam Bey, who immediately summoned Iskander to consult on the necessary operations. The chieftains agreed that instant pursuit was indispensable, and soon the savage Hæmus poured forth from its green bosom swarms of that light cavalry which was perhaps even a more fatal arm of the Turkish power than the famous Janissaries themselves. They hovered on the rear of the retreating Christians, charged the wavering, captured the unwary. It was impossible to resist their sudden and impetuous movements, which rendered their escape as secure as their onset was overwhelming. Wearied at length by the repeated assaults, Hunniades, who, attended by some chosen knights, had himself repaired to the rear, gave orders for the army to halt and offer battle.

Their pursuers instantly withdrew to a distance, and gradually forming into two divisions, awaited the arrival of the advancing army of the Turks. The

Moslemin came forward in fierce array, and with the sanguine courage inspired by expected triumph. Very conspicuous was Iskander bounding in his crimson vest upon his ebon steed, and waving his gleaming scimetar.

The Janissaries charged, calling upon Allah with an awful shout. The Christian knights, invoking the Christian saints, received the Turks at the points of their lances. But many a noble lance was shivered that morn, and many a bold rider and worthy steed bit the dust of that field, borne down by the irresistible numbers of their fierce adversaries. Everywhere the balls and the arrows whistled through the air, and sometimes an isolated shriek heard amid the general clang, announced another victim to the fell and mysterious agency of the Greek fire.

Hunniades, while he performed all the feats of an approved warrior, watched with anxiety the disposition of the Turkish troops. Hitherto, from the nature of their position but a portion of both armies had interfered in the contest, and as yet Iskander had kept aloof. But now, as the battle each instant raged with more fury, and as it was evident that ere long the main force of both armies must be brought into collision, Hunniades, with a terrible suspense, watched whether the Grecian prince were willing or even capable of executing his plan. Without this fulfilment, the Christian hero could not conceal from himself that the day must be decided against the Cross.

In the meantime Iskander marked the course of events with not less eagerness than Hunniades. Already Karam Bey had more than once summoned him to bring the Epirots into action. He assented; but an hour passed away without changing his posi-

tion. At length, more from astonishment than rage, the Turkish commander sent his chief secretary Mousa himself to impress his wishes upon his colleague, and obtain some explanation of his views and conduct. Mousa found Iskander surrounded by some of the principal Epirot nobles, all mounted on horseback, and standing calmly under a wide-spreading plane tree. The chief secretary of Karam Bey was too skilful a courtier to permit his countenance to express his feelings, and he delivered himself of his mission rather as if he had come to request advice, than to communicate a reprimand.

'Your master is a wise man, Mousa,' replied Iskander; 'but even Karam Bey may be mistaken. He deems that a battle is not to be won by loitering under a shadowy tree. Now I differ with him, and I even mean to win this day by such a piece of truancy. However, it may certainly now be time for more active work. You smile encouragement, good Mousa. Giorgio, Demetrius, to your duty!'

At these words, two stout Epirots advanced to the unfortunate secretary, seized and bound him and placed him, on horseback before one of their comrades.

'Now all who love their country follow me!' exclaimed Iskander. So saying, and at the head of five thousand horsemen, Iskander quitted the field at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER VI.

'The Cross and Liberty!'

ITH incredible celerity Iskander and his cavalry dashed over the plains of Roumelia, and never halted, except for short and hurried intervals of rest and repose, until they had entered the mountainous borders of Epirus, and were within fifty miles of its capital, Croia. On the eve of entering the kingdom of his fathers, Iskander ordered his guards to produce the chief secretary of Karam Bey. Exhausted with fatigue, vexation, and terror, the disconsolate Mousa was led forward.

'Cheer up, worthy Mousa!' said Iskander, lying his length on the green turf. 'We have had a sharp ride; but I doubt not we shall soon find ourselves, by the blessing of God, in good quarters. There is a city at hand which they call Croia, and in which once, as the rumour runs, the son of my father should not have had to go seek for an entrance. No matter. Methinks, worthy Mousa, thou art the only man in our society that can sign thy name. Come now, write me an order, signed Karam Bey to the governor of this said city, for its delivery up to the

valiant champion of the Crescent, Iskander, and thou shalt ride in future at a pace more suitable to a secretary.'

The worthy Mousa humbled himself to the ground, and then taking his writing materials from his girdle, inscribed the desired order, and delivered it to Iskander, who, glancing at the inscription, pushed it into his vest.

'I shall proceed at once to Croia, with a few friends,' said Iskander; 'do you, my bold companions, follow me this eve in various parties, and in various routes. At dead of the second night, collect in silence before the gates of Croia!'

Thus speaking, Iskander called for his now refreshed charger, and accompanied by two hundred horsemen, bade farewell for a brief period to his troops, and soon having crossed the mountains, descended into the fertile plains of Epirus.

When the sun rose in the morning, Iskander and his friends beheld at the further end of the plain a fine city shining in the light. It was surrounded with lofty turreted walls flanked by square towers, and was built upon a gentle eminence, which gave it a majestic appearance. Behind it rose a lofty range of purple mountains of picturesque form, and the highest peaks capped with snow. A noble lake, from which troops of wild fowl occasionally rose, expanded like a sheet of silver on one side of the city. The green breast of the contiguous hills sparkled with white houses.

'Behold Croia!' exclaimed Iskander. 'Our old fathers could choose a site, comrades. We shall see whether they expended their time and treasure for strangers, or their own seed.' So saying he spurred

his horse, and with panting hearts and smiling faces, Iskander and his company had soon arrived in the vicinity of the city.

The city was surrounded by a beautiful region of corn-fields and fruit-trees. The road was arched with the overhanging boughs. The birds chirped on every spray. It was a blithe and merry morn. Iskander plucked a bunch of olives as he cantered along. 'Dear friends,' he said, looking round with an inspiring smile, 'let us gather our first harvest!' And, thereupon, each putting forth his rapid hand, seized, as he rushed by, the emblem of possession, and following the example of his leader, placed it in his cap.

They arrived at the gates of the city, which was strongly garrisoned; and Iskander, followed by his train, galloped up the height of the citadel. Alighting from his horse, he was ushered into the divan of the governor, an ancient Pacha, who received the conqueror of Caramania with all the respect that became so illustrious a champion of the Crescent. After the usual forms of ceremonious hospitality, Iskander, with a courteous air, presented him the order for delivering up the citadel; and the old Pacha, resigning himself to the loss of his post with Oriental submission, instantly delivered the keys of the citadel and town to Iskander, and requested permission immediately to quit the scene of his late command.

Quitting the citadel, Iskander now proceeded through the whole town, and in the afternoon reviewed the Turkish garrison in the great square. As the late governor was anxious to quit Croia that very day, Iskander insisted on a considerable portion of the garrison accompanying him as a guard of honour, and returning the next morning. The rest he divided in

several quarters, and placed the gates in charge of his own companions.

At midnight the Epirots, faithful to their orders, arrived and united beneath the walls of the city, and after interchanging the signals agreed upon, the gates were opened. A large body instantly marched and secured the citadel. The rest, conducted by appointed leaders, surrounded the Turks in their quarters. And suddenly, in the noon of night, in that great city, arose a clang so dreadful that people leapt up from their sleep and stared with stupor. Instantly the terrace of every house blazed with torches, and it became as light as day. Troops of armed men were charging down the streets, brandishing their scimitars and yataghans, and exclaiming, 'The Cross, the Cross!' 'Liberty!' 'Greece!' 'Iskander and Epirus!' The townsmen recognised their countrymen by their language and their dress. The name of Iskander acted as a spell. They stopped not to inquire. A magic sympathy at once persuaded them that this great man had, by the grace of Heaven, recurred to the creed and country of his fathers. And so every townsman, seizing the nearest weapon, with a spirit of patriotic frenzy, rushed into the streets, crying out, 'The Cross, the Cross! Liberty! Greece! Iskander and Epirus!' Ay! even the women lost all womanly fears, and stimulated instead of soothing the impulse of their masters. They fetched them arms, they held the torches, they sent them forth with vows and prayers and imprecations, their children clinging to their robes, and repeating with enthusiasm, phrases which they could not comprehend.

The Turks fought with the desperation of men who feel that they are betrayed, and must be victims.

The small and isolated bodies were soon massacred, all with cold steel, for at this time, although some of the terrible inventions of modern warfare were introduced, their use was not general. The citadel, indeed, was fortified with cannon; but the greater part of the soldiery trusted to their crooked swords and their unerring javelins. The main force of the Turkish garrison had been quartered in an old palace of the archbishop, situate in the middle of the city on a slightly rising and open ground, a massy building of rustic stone. Here the Turks, although surrounded, defended themselves desperately, using their cross bows with terrible effect; and hither, the rest of the city being now secured, Iskander himself repaired to achieve its complete deliverance.

The Greeks had endeavoured to carry the principal entrance of the palace by main force, but the strength of the portal had resisted their utmost exertions, and the arrows of the besieged had at length forced them to retire to a distance. Iskander directed that two pieces of cannon should be dragged down from the citadel, and then played against the entrance. In the meantime, he ordered immense piles of damp faggots to be lit before the building, the smoke of which prevented the besieged from taking any aim. The ardour of the people was so great that the cannon were soon served against the palace, and their effects were speedily remarked. The massy portal shook; a few blows of the battering ram, and it fell. The Turks sallied forth, were received with a shower of Greek fire, and driven in with agonising yells. Some endeavoured to escape from the windows, and were speared or cut down; some appeared wringing their hands in despair upon the terraced roof. Suddenly

the palace was announced to be on fire. A tall white blueish flame darted up from a cloud of smoke, and soon, as if by magic, the whole back of the building was encompassed with rising tongues of red and raging light. Amid a Babel of shrieks, and shouts, and cheers, and prayers, and curses, the roof of the palace fell in with a crash, which produced amid the besiegers an awful and momentary silence, but in an instant they started from their strange inactivity, and rushing forward, leapt into the smoking ruins, and at the same time completed the massacre and achieved their freedom.

CHAPTER VII.

Terrible News.

T BREAK of dawn Iskander sent couriers throughout all Epirus, announcing the fall of Croia, and that he had raised the standard of independence in his ancient country. He also despatched a trusty messenger to Prince Nicæus at Athens, and to the great Hunniades. The people were so excited throughout all Epirus, at this great and unthought-of intelligence, that they simultaneously rose in all the open country, and massacred the Turks, and the towns were only restrained in a forced submission to Amurath, by the strong garrisons of the Sultan.

Now Iskander was very anxious to effect the removal of these garrisons without loss of time, in order that if Amurath sent a great power against him, as he expected, the invading army might have nothing to rely upon but its own force, and that his attention might not in any way be diverted from effecting their overthrow. Therefore, as soon as his troops had rested, and he had formed his new recruits into some order, which, with their willing spirits, did not de-

mand many days, Iskander set out from Croia, at the head of twelve thousand men, and marched against the strong city of Petrella, meeting in his way the remainder of the garrison of Croia on their return, who surrendered themselves to him at discretion. Petrella was only one day's march from Croia, and when Iskander arrived there he requested a conference with the governor, and told his tale so well, representing the late overthrow of the Turks by Hunniades, and the incapacity of Amurath at present to relieve him, that the Turkish commander agreed to deliver up the place, and leave the country with his troops, particularly as the alternative of Iskander to these easy terms was ever conquest without quarter. And thus, by a happy mixture of audacity and adroitness, the march of Iskander throughout Epirus was rather like a triumph than a campaign, the Turkish garrisons imitating without any exception, the conduct of their comrades at Petrella, and dreading the fate of their comrades at the capital. In less than a month Iskander returned to Epirus, having delivered the whole country from the Moslem yoke.

Hitherto Iskander had heard nothing either of Hunniades or Nicæus. He learnt, therefore, with great interest as he passed through the gates of the city, that the Prince of Athens had arrived at Croia the preceding eve, and also that his messenger had returned from the Hungarian camp. Amid the acclamations of an enthusiastic people, Iskander once more ascended the citadel of Croia. Nicæus received him at the gate. Iskander sprang from his horse, and embraced his friend. Hand in hand, and followed by their respective trains, they entered the fortress palace.

'Dear friend,' said Iskander, when they were once more alone, 'you see we were right not to despair. Two months have scarcely elapsed since we parted without a prospect, or with the most gloomy one, and now we are in a fair way of achieving all that we can desire. Epirus is free!'

'I came to claim my share in its emancipation,' said Nicæus, with a smile, 'but Iskander is another Cæsar!'

'You will have many opportunities yet, believe me, Nicæus, of proving your courage and your patriotism,' replied Iskander; 'Amurath will never allow this affair to pass over in this quiet manner. I did not commence this struggle without a conviction that it would demand all the energy and patience of a long life. I shall be rewarded if I leave freedom as an heritage to my countrymen; but for the rest, I feel that I bid farewell to every joy of life, except the ennobling consciousness of performing a noble duty. In the meantime, I understand a messenger awaits me here from the great Hunniades. Unless that shield of Christendom maintain himself in his present position, our chance of ultimate security is feeble. With his constant diversion in Bulgaria, we may contrive here to struggle into success. You sometimes laugh at my sanguine temper, Nicæus. To say the truth, I am more serene than sanguine, and was never more conscious of the strength of my opponent than now, when it appears that I have beaten him. Hark! the people cheer. I love the people, Nicæus, who are ever influenced by genuine and generous feelings. They cheer as if they had once more gained a country. Alas! they little know what they must endure even at the best. Nay! look not

gloomy; we have done great things, and will do more. Who waits without there? Demetrius! Call the messenger from Lord Hunniades.'

An Epirot bearing a silken packet was now introduced, which he delivered to Iskander. Reverently touching the hand of his chieftain, the messenger then kissed his own and withdrew. Iskander broke the seal, and drew forth a letter from the silken cover.

'So! this is well!' exclaimed the prince, with great animation, as he threw his quick eye over the letter. 'As I hoped and deemed, a most complete victory. Karam Bey himself a prisoner, baggage, standards, great guns, treasure. Brave soldier of the Cross! (may I prove so!) Your perfectly-devised movement (poh, poh!) Hah! what is this?' exclaimed Iskander, turning pale; his lip quivered, his eye looked dim. He walked to an arched window. His companion, who supposed that he was reading, did not disturb him.

'Poor, poor Hunniades!' at length exclaimed Iskander, shaking his head.

'What of him?' inquired Nicæus, quickly.

'The sharpest accident of war!' replied Iskander. 'It quite clouds my spirit. We must forget these things, we must forget. Epirus! he is not a patriot who can spare a thought from thee. And yet, so young, so beautiful, so gifted, so worthy of a hero! when I saw her by her great father's side, sharing his toils, aiding his councils, supplying his necessities, methought I gazed upon a ministering angel! upon——'

'Stop, stop in mercy's name, Iskander!' exclaimed Nicæus, in a very agitated tone. 'What is all this? Surely no, surely not, surely Iduna——'

'Tis she!'

'Dead?' exclaimed Nicæus, rushing up to his companion, and seizing his arm.

'Worse, much worse!'

'God of Heaven!' exclaimed the young prince, with almost a frantic air. 'Tell me all, tell me all! This suspense fires my brain. Iskander, you know not what this woman is to me: the sole object of my being, the bane, the blessing of my life! Speak, dear friend, speak! I beseech you! Where is Iduna?'

'A prisoner to the Turk.'

'Iduna a prisoner to the Turk. I'll not believe it! Why do we wear swords? Where's chivalry? Iduna, a prisoner to the Turk! 'Tis false. It cannot be. Iskander, you are a coward! I am a coward! All are cowards! A prisoner to the Turk! Iduna! What, the Rose of Christendom! has it been plucked by such a turbaned dog as Amurath? Farewell, Epirus! Farewell, classic Athens! Farewell, bright fields of Greece, and dreams that made them brighter! The sun of all my joy and hope is set, and set for ever!'

So saying, Nicæus, tearing his hair and garments, flung himself upon the floor, and hid his face in his robes.

Iskander paced the room with a troubled step and thoughtful brow. After some minutes he leant down by the Prince of Athens, and endeavoured to console him.

'It is in vain, Iskander, it is in vain,' said Nicæus. 'I wish to die.'

'Were I a favoured lover, in such a situation,' replied Iskander, 'I should scarcely consider death my

duty, unless the sacrifice of myself preserved my mistress.'

'Hah!' exclaimed Nicæus, starting from the ground. 'Do you conceive, then, the possibility of rescuing her?'

'If she live, she is a prisoner in the Seraglio at Adrianople. You are as good a judge as myself of the prospect that awaits your exertions. It is, without doubt, a difficult adventure, but such, methinks, as a Christian knight should scarcely shun.'

'To horse,' exclaimed Nicæus, 'To horse —— And yet what can I do? Were she in any other place but the capital I might rescue her by force, but in the heart of their empire, it is impossible. Is there no ransom that can tempt the Turk? My principality would rise in the balance beside this jewel.'

'That were scarcely wise, and certainly not just,' replied Iskander; 'but ransom will be of no avail. Hunniades has already offered to restore Karam Bey, and all the prisoners of rank, and the chief trophies, and Amurath has refused to listen to any terms. The truth is, Iduna has found favour in the eyes of his son, the young Mahomed.'

'Holy Virgin! hast thou no pity on this Christian maid?' exclaimed Nicæus. 'The young Mahomed! Shall this licentious infidel——ah! Iskander, dear, dear Iskander, you who have so much wisdom, and so much courage, you who can devise all things, and dare all things, help me, help me; on my knees I do beseech you, take up this trying cause of foul oppression, and for the sake of all you love and reverence, your creed, your country, and perchance your friend, let your great genius, like some solemn

angel, haste to the rescue of the sweet Iduna, and save her, save her!'

'Some thoughts like these were rising in my mind when first I spoke,' replied Iskander. 'This is a better cue, far more becoming princes than boyish tears, and all the outward misery of woe, a tattered garment and dishevelled locks. Come, Nicæus, we have to struggle with a mighty fortune. Let us be firm as Fate itself.'

CHAPTER VIII.

A Knightly Errand.

MMEDIATELY after his interview with Nicæus, Iskander summoned some of the chief citizens of Croia to the citadel, and submitting to them his arrangements for the administration of Epirus, announced the necessity of his instant departure for a short interval; and the same evening, ere the moon had risen, himself and the Prince of Athens quitted the city, and proceeded in the direction of Adrianople. They travelled with great rapidity until they reached a small town upon the frontiers, where they halted for one day. Here, in the bazaar, Iskander purchased for himself the dress of an Armenian physician. In his long dark robes, and large round cap of black wool, his face and hands stained, and his beard and mustachios shaven, it seemed impossible that he could be recognised. Nicæus was habited as his page, in a dress of coarse red cloth, sitting tight to his form, and a red cap, with a long blue tassel. He carried a large bag containing drugs, some surgical instruments, and a few books. In this guise, as soon as the gates were open on the morrow, Iskan-

der, mounted on a small mule, and Nicæus on a large donkey, the two Princes commenced the pass of the mountainous range, an arm of the Balkan which divided Epirus from Roumelia.

'I broke the wind of the finest charger in all Asia when I last ascended these mountains,' said Iskander; 'I hope this day's journey may be accepted as a sort of atonement.'

'Faith! there is little doubt I am the best mounted of the two,' said Nicæus. 'However, I hope we shall return at a sharper pace.'

'How came it, my Nicæus,' said Iskander, 'that you never mentioned to me the name of Iduna when we were at Athens. I little supposed when I made my sudden visit to Hunniades, that I was about to appeal to so fair a host. She is a rarely gifted lady.'

'I knew of her being at the camp as little as yourself,' replied the Prince of Athens, 'and for the rest, the truth is, Iskander, there are some slight crosses in our loves, which Time, I hope, will fashion rightly.' So saying Nicæus pricked on his donkey, and flung his stick at a bird which was perched on the branch of a tree. Iskander did not resume a topic to which his companion seemed disinclined. Their journey was tedious. Towards nightfall they reached the summit of the usual track; and as the descent was difficult, they were obliged to rest until daybreak.

On the morrow they had a magnificent view of the rich plains of Roumelia, and in the extreme distance, the great city of Adrianople, its cupolas and minarets blazing and sparkling in the sun. This glorious prospect at once revived all their energies. It seemed that the moment of peril and of fate had arrived

They pricked on their sorry steeds; and on the morning of the next day presented themselves at the gates of the city. The thorough knowledge which Iskander possessed of the Turkish character obtained them an entrance, which was at one time almost doubtful, from the irritability and impatience of Nicæus. They repaired to a caravansera of good repute in the neighbourhood of the seraglio; and having engaged their rooms, the Armenian physician, attended by his page, visited several of the neighbouring coffee-houses, announcing, at the same time, his arrival, his profession, and his skill.

As Iskander felt pulses, examined tongues, and distributed drugs and charms, he listened with interest and amusement to the conversation of which he himself was often the hero. He found that the Turks had not yet recovered from their consternation at his audacity and success. They were still wondering, and if possible more astounded than indignant. The politicians of the coffee-houses, chiefly consisting of Janissaries, were loud in their murmurs. The popularity of Amurath had vanished before the triumph of Hunniades, and the rise of Iskander.

'But Allah has in some instances favoured the faithful,' remarked Iskander; 'I heard in my travels of your having captured a great princess of the Giaours.'

'God is great!' said an elderly Turk with a long white beard. 'The Hakim congratulates the faithful because they have taken a woman!'

'Not so merely,' replied Iskander; 'I heard the woman was a princess. If so, the people of Franguestan will pay any ransom for their great women; and by giving up this fair Giaour you may free many of the faithful.'

'Mashallah!' said another ancient Turk, sipping his coffee. 'The Hakim speaks wisely.'

'May I murder my mother!' exclaimed a young Janissary, with great indignation. 'But this is the very thing that makes me wild against Amurath. Is not this Princess a daughter of that accursed Giaour, that dog of dogs, Hunniades? and has he not offered for her ransom our brave Karam Bey himself and his chosen warriors? and has not Amurath said nay? And why has he said nay? Because his son, the Prince Mahomed, instead of fighting against the Giaours, has looked upon one of their women, and has become a Mejnoun. Pah! May I murder my mother, but if the Giaours were in full march to the city, I'd not fight. And let him tell this to the Cadi who dares; for there are ten thousand of us, and we have sworn by the Kettle, but we will not fight for Giaours, or those who love Giaours!'

'If you mean me, Ali, about going to the Cadi,' said the chief eunuch of Mahomed, who was standing by, 'let me tell you I am no tale-bearer, and scorn to do an unmanly act. The young Prince can beat the Giaours without the aid of those who are noisy enough in a coffee-house, when they are quiet enough in the field. And, for the rest of the business, you may all ease your hearts; for the Frangy Princess you talk of is pining away, and will soon die. The Sultan has offered a hundred purses of gold to any one who cures her; but the gold will never be counted by the Hasnadar, or I will double it.'

'Try your fortune, Hakim,' said several laughing loungers to Iskander.

'Allah has stricken the Frangy Princess,' said the old Turk with a white beard.

'He will strike all Giaours,' said his ancient companion, sipping his coffee. ''Tis so written.'

'Well! I do not like to hear of women slaves pining to death,' said the young Janissary, in a softened tone, 'particularly when they are young. Amurath should have ransomed her, or he might have given her to one of his officers, or any young fellow that had particularly distinguished himself.' And so, twirling his mustachios, and flinging down his piastre, the young Janissary strutted out of the coffee-house.

'When we were young,' said the old Turk with the white beard to his companion, shaking his head, 'when we were young——'

'We conquered Anatolia, and never opened our mouths,' rejoined his companion.

'I never offered an opinion till I was sixty,' said the old Turk; 'and then it was one which had been in our family for a century.'

'No wonder Hunniades carries everything before him,' said his companion.

'And that accursed Iskander,' said the old man.

The chief eunuch, finishing his vase of sherbet, moved away. The Armenian physician followed him.

CHAPTER IX.

The Armenian Physician.

HE chief eunuch turned into a burial-ground, through which a way led, by an avenue of cypress-trees, to the quarter of the Seraglio. The Armenian physician, accompanied by his page, followed him.

'Noble sir!' said the Armenian physician; 'may I trespass for a moment on your lordship's attention?'

'Worthy Hakim, is it you?' replied the chief eunuch, turning round with an encouraging smile of courteous condescension, 'your pleasure?'

'I would speak to you of important matters,' said the physician.

The eunuch carelessly seated himself on a richly-carved tomb, and crossing his legs with an air of pleasant superiority, adjusted a fine emerald that sparkled on his finger, and bade the Hakim address him without hesitation.

'I am a physician,' said the Armenian.

The eunuch nodded.

'And I heard your lordship in the coffee-house mention that the Sultan, our sublime Master, had offered a rich reward to any one who could effect the cure of a favourite captive.'

'No less a reward than one hundred purses of gold,' remarked the eunuch. 'The reward is proportioned to the exigency of the case. Believe me, worthy sir, it is desperate.'

'With mortal means,' replied the Armenian; 'but I possess a talisman of magical influence, which no disorder can resist. I would fain try its efficacy.'

'This is not the first talisman that has been offered us, worthy doctor,' said the eunuch, smiling incredulously.

'But the first that has been offered on these terms,' said the Armenian. 'Let me cure the captive, and of the one hundred purses, a moiety shall belong to yourself. Ay! so confident am I of success, that I deem it no hazard to commence our contract by this surety.' And so saying, the Armenian took from his finger a gorgeous carbuncle, and offered it to the eunuch. The worthy dependant of the Seraglio had a great taste in jewellery. He examined the stone with admiration, and placed it on his finger with complacency. 'I require no inducements to promote the interests of science, and the purposes of charity,' said the eunuch, with a patronising air. ''Tis assuredly a pretty stone, and, as the memorial of an ingenious stranger, whom I respect, I shall, with pleasure, retain it. You were saying something about a talisman. Are you serious? I doubt not that there are means which might obtain you the desired trial; but the Prince Mahomed is as violent when displeased or disappointed as munificent when gratified. Cure this Christian captive, and we may certainly receive the promised purses; fail, and your head will as assuredly be flung into the Seraglio moat, to say nothing of my own.'

'Most noble sir!' said the physician, 'I am willing to undertake the experiment on the terms you mention. Rest assured that the patient, if alive, must, with this remedy, speedily recover. You marvel! Believe me, had you witnessed the cures which it has already effected, you would only wonder at its otherwise incredible influence.'

'You have the advantage,' replied the eunuch, 'of addressing a man who has seen something of the world. I travel every year to Anatolia with the Prince Mahomed. Were I a narrow-minded bigot, and had never been five miles from Adrianople in the whole course of my life, I might indeed be sceptical. But I am a patron of science, and have heard of talismans. How much might this ring weigh, think you?'

'I have heard it spoken of as a carbuncle of uncommon size,' replied the Armenian.

'Where did you say you lodge, Hakim?'

'At the Khan of Bedreddin.'

'A very proper dwelling. Well, we shall see. Have you more jewels? I might, perhaps, put you in the way of parting with some at good prices. The Khan of Bedreddin is very conveniently situated. I may, perhaps, towards evening, taste your coffee at the Khan of Bedreddin, and we will talk of this said talisman. Allah be with you, worthy Hakim!' The eunuch nodded, not without encouragement, and went his way.

'Anxiety alone enabled me to keep my countenance,' said Nicæus. 'A patron of science, forsooth! Of all the insolent, shallow-brained, rapacious coxcombs——'

'Hush, my friend!' said Iskander, with a smile. 'The chief eunuch of the heir apparent of the Turkish

empire is a far greater man than a poor prince, or a proscribed rebel. This worthy can do our business, and I trust will. He clearly bites, and a richer bait will, perhaps, secure him. In the meantime, we must be patient, and remember whose destiny is at stake.'

CHAPTER X.

In the Seraglio.

THE chief eunuch did not keep the adventurous companions long in suspense; for, before the muezzin had announced the close of day from the minarets, he had reached the Khan of Bedreddin, and inquired for the Armenian physician.

'We have no time to lose,' said the eunuch to Iskander. 'Bring with you whatever you may require, and follow me.'

The eunuch led the way, Iskander and Nicæus maintaining a respectful distance. After proceeding down several streets, they arrived at the burial-ground, where they had conversed in the morning; and when they had entered this more retired spot, the eunuch fell back, and addressed his companion.

'Now, worthy Hakim,' he said, 'if you deceive me, I will never patronize a man of science again. I found an opportunity of speaking to the Prince this afternoon of your talisman, and he has taken from my representations such a fancy for its immediate proof, that I found it quite impossible to postpone its trial even until to-morrow. I mentioned the terms. I told

the Prince your life was the pledge. I said nothing of the moiety of the reward, worthy Hakim. That is an affair between ourselves. I trust to your honour, and I always act thus with men of science.'

'I shall not disgrace my profession or your confidence, rest assured,' replied Iskander. 'And am I to see the captive this night?'

'I doubt it not. Are you prepared? We might, perhaps, gain a little time, if very necessary.'

'By no means, sir; Truth is ever prepared.'

Thus conversing, they passed through the burial-ground, and approached some high, broad walls, forming a terrace, and planted with young sycamore trees. The eunuch tapped, with his silver stick, at a small gate, which opened, and admitted them into a garden, full of large clumps of massy shrubs. Through these a winding walk led for some way, and then conducted them to an open lawn, on which was situate a vast and irregular building. As they approached the pile, a young man of imperious aspect rushed forward from a gate, and abruptly accosted Iskander.

'Are you the Armenian physician?' he inquired.

Iskander bowed assent.

'Have you got your talisman? You know the terms? Cure this Christian girl and you shall name your own reward; fail, and I shall claim your forfeit head.'

'The terms are well understood, mighty Prince,' said Iskander, for the young man was no less a personage than the son of Amurath, the future conqueror of Constantinople; 'but I am confident there will be no necessity for the terror of Christendom claiming any other heads than those of his enemies.'

'Kaflis will conduct you at once to your patient,' said Mahomed. 'For myself, I cannot rest until I know the result of your visit. I shall wander about these gardens, and destroy the flowers, which is the only pleasure now left me.'

Kaflis motioned to his companions to advance, and they entered the Seraglio.

At the end of a long gallery they came to a great portal, which Kaflis opened, and Iskander and Nicæus for a moment supposed that they had arrived at the chief hall of the Tower of Babel, but they found the shrill din only proceeded from a large company of women, who were employed in distilling the rare attar of the jasmine flower. All their voices ceased on the entrance of the strangers, as if by a miracle; but when they had examined them, and observed that it was only a physician and his boy, their awe, or their surprise, disappeared; and they crowded round Iskander, some holding out their wrists, others lolling out their tongues, and some asking questions, which perplexed alike the skill and the modesty of the adventurous dealer in magical medicine. The annoyance, however, was not of great duration, for Kaflis so belaboured their fair shoulders with his official baton, that they instantly retreated with precipitation, uttering violent shrieks, and bestowing on the eunuch so many titles, that Iskander and his page were quite astounded at the intuitive knowledge which the imprisoned damsels possessed of that vocabulary of abuse, which is in general mastered only by the experience of active existence.

Quitting this chamber, the eunuch and his companions ascended a lofty staircase. They halted at length before a door. 'This is the chamber of the tower,'

said their guide, 'and here we shall find the fair captive.' He knocked, the door was opened by a female slave, and Iskander and Nicæus, with an anxiety they could with difficulty conceal, were ushered into a small but sumptuous apartment. In the extremity was a recess covered with a light gauzy curtain. The eunuch bidding them keep in the background, advanced, and cautiously withdrawing the curtain slightly aside, addressed some words in a low voice to the inmate of the recess. In a few minutes the eunuch beckoned to Iskander to advance, and whispered to him: 'She would not at first see you, but I have told her you are a Christian, the more the pity, and she consents.' So saying, he withdrew the curtain, and exhibited a veiled female figure lying on a couch.

'Noble lady,' said the physician in Greek, which he had ascertained the eunuch did not comprehend; 'pardon the zeal of a Christian friend. Though habited in this garb, I have served under your illustrious sire. I should deem my life well spent in serving the daughter of the great Hunniades.'

'Kind stranger,' replied the captive, 'I was ill prepared for such a meeting. I thank you for your sympathy, but my sad fortunes are beyond human aid.'

'God works by humble instruments, noble lady,' said Iskander, 'and with his blessing we may yet prosper.'

'I fear that I must look to death as my only refuge,' replied Iduna, 'and still more, I fear that it is not so present a refuge as my oppressors themselves imagine. But you are a physician; tell me then how speedily Nature will make me free.'

She held forth her hand, which Iskander took and involuntarily pressed. 'Noble lady,' he said, 'my

skill is a mere pretence to enter these walls. The only talisman I bear with me is a message from your friends.'

'Indeed!' said Iduna, in an agitated tone.

'Restrain yourself, noble lady,' said Iskander, interposing, 'restrain yourself. Were you any other but the daughter of Hunniades I would not have ventured upon this perilous exploit. But I know that the Lady Iduna has inherited something more than the name of her great ancestors, their heroic soul. If ever there were a moment in her life in which it behoved her to exert all her energies, that moment has arrived. The physician who addresses her, and his attendant who waits at hand, are two of the Lady Iduna's most devoted friends. There is nothing that they will not hazard to effect her delivery; and they have matured a plan of escape which they are sanguine must succeed. Yet its completion will require, on her part, great anxiety of mind, greater exertion of body, danger, fatigue, privation. Is the Lady Iduna prepared for all this endurance, and all this hazard?'

'Noble friend,' replied Iduna, 'for I cannot deem you a stranger, and none but a chivalric knight could have entered upon this almost forlorn adventure; you have not, I trust, miscalculated my character. I am a slave, and unless heaven will interpose, must soon be a dishonoured one. My freedom and my fame are alike at stake. There is no danger, and no suffering which I will not gladly welcome, provided there be even a remote chance of regaining my liberty and securing my honour.'

'You are in the mind I counted on. Now, mark my words, dear lady. Seize an opportunity this

evening of expressing to your gaolers that you have already experienced some benefit from my visit, and announce your rising confidence in my skill. In the meantime I will make such a report that our daily meetings will not be difficult. For the present, farewell. The Prince Mahomed waits without, and I would exchange some words with him before I go.'

'And must we part without my being acquainted with the generous friends to whom I am indebted for an act of devotion which almost reconciles me to my sad fate?' said Iduna. 'You will not, perhaps, deem the implicit trust reposed in you by one whom you have no interest to deceive, and who, if deceived, cannot be placed in a worse position than she at present fills, as a very gratifying mark of confidence, yet that trust is reposed in you; and let me, at least, soothe the galling dreariness of my solitary hours, by the recollection of the friends to whom I am indebted for a deed of friendship which has filled me with a feeling of wonder from which I have not yet recovered.'

'The person who has penetrated the Seraglio of Constantinople in disguise to rescue the Lady Iduna,' answered Iskander, 'is the Prince Nicæus.'

'Nicæus!' exclaimed Iduna, in an agitated tone. 'The voice to which I listen is surely not that of the Prince Nicæus; nor the form on which I gaze,' she added, as she unveiled. Beside her stood the tall figure of the Armenian physician. She beheld his swarthy and unrecognised countenance. She cast her dark eyes around with an air of beautiful perplexity.

'I am a friend of the Prince Nicæus,' said the physician. 'He is here. Shall he advance? Alexis,'

called out Iskander, not waiting for her reply. The page of the physician came forward, but the eunuch accompanied him. 'All is right,' said Iskander to Kaflis. 'We are sure of our hundred purses. But, without doubt, with any other aid, the case were desperate.'

'There is but one God,' said the eunuch, polishing his carbuncle, with a visage radiant as the gem. 'I never repented patronizing men of science. The Prince waits without. Come along!' He took Iskander by the arm. 'Where is your boy? What are you doing there, sir?' inquired the eunuch, sharply, of Nicæus, who was tarrying behind and kissing the hand of Iduna.

'I was asking the lady for a favour to go to the coffee-house with,' replied Nicæus, 'you forget that *I* am to have none of the hundred purses.'

'True,' said the eunuch; 'there is something in that. Here, boy, here is a piastre for you. I like to encourage men of science, and all that belong to them. Do not go and spend it all in one morning, boy, and when the fair captive is cured, if you remind me, boy, perhaps I may give you another.'

CHAPTER XI.

A Pledge.

KAFLIS and his charge again reached the garden. The twilight was nearly past. A horseman galloped up to them, followed by several running footmen. It was the Prince.

'Well, Hakim,' he inquired in his usual abrupt style, 'can you cure her?'

'Yes,' answered Iskander, firmly.

'Now listen, Hakim,' said Mahomed. 'I must very shortly leave the city and proceed into Epirus at the head of our troops. I have sworn two things, and I have sworn them by the holy stone. Ere the new moon, I will have the heart of Iduna and the head of Iskander!'

The physician bowed.

'If you can so restore the health of this Frangy girl,' continued Mahomed, 'that she may attend me within ten days into Epirus, you shall claim from my treasury what sum you like, and become physician to the Seraglio. What say you?'

'My hope and my belief is,' replied Iskander, 'that within ten days she may breathe the air of Epirus.'

'By my father's beard, you are a man after my own heart,' exclaimed the Prince; 'and since thou

dealest in talismans, Hakim, can you give me a charm that will secure me a meeting with this Epirot rebel within the term, so that I may keep my oath? What say you? what say you?'

'There are such spells,' replied Iskander. 'But mark, I can only secure the meeting, not the head.'

'That is my part,' said Mahomed, with an arrogant sneer. 'But the meeting, the meeting?'

'You know the fountain of Kallista in Epirus. Its virtues are renowned.'

'I have heard of it.'

'Plunge your scimitar in its midnight waters thrice, on the eve of the new moon, and each time summon the enemy you would desire to meet. He will not fail you.'

'If you cure the captive, I will credit the legend, and keep the appointment,' replied Mahomed, thoughtfully.

'I have engaged to do that,' replied the physician.

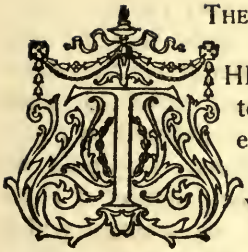
'Well, then, I shall redeem my pledge,' said the Prince.

'But mind,' said the physician, 'while I engage to cure the lady and produce the warrior, I can secure your highness neither the heart of the one nor the head of the other.'

''Tis understood,' said Mahomed.

CHAPTER XII.

The Rescue of Iduna.



HE Armenian physician did not fail to attend his captive patient at an early hour on the ensuing morn. His patron Kaflis received him with an encouraging smile.

'The talisman already works,' said the eunuch; 'she has passed a good night, and confesses to an improvement. Our purses are safe. Methinks I already count the gold. But I say, worthy Hakim, come hither, come hither,' and Kaflis looked around to be sure that no one was within hearing. 'I say,' and here he put on a very mysterious air indeed, 'the Prince is generous? you understand? We go shares. We shall not quarrel. I never yet repented patronising a man of science, and I am sure I never shall. The Prince, you see, is violent, but generous. I would not cure her too soon, eh?'

'You take a most discreet view of affairs,' responded Iskander, with an air of complete assent, and they entered the chamber of the tower.

Iduna performed her part with dexterity; but, indeed, it required less skill than herself and her ad-

visers had at first imagined. Her malady, although it might have ended fatally, was in its origin entirely mental, and the sudden prospect of freedom, and of restoration to her country and her family, at a moment when she had delivered herself up to despair, afforded her a great and instantaneous benefit. She could not, indeed, sufficiently restrain her spirits, and smiled incredulously when Iskander mentioned the impending exertion and fatigues with doubt and apprehension. His anxiety to return immediately to Epirus, determined him to adopt the measures for her rescue without loss of time, and on his third visit, he prepared her for making the great attempt on the ensuing morn. Hitherto Iskander had refrained from revealing himself to Iduna. He was induced to adopt this conduct by various considerations. He could no longer conceal from himself that the daughter of Hunniades exercised an influence over his feelings which he was unwilling to encourage. His sincere friendship for Nicæus, and his conviction that it was his present duty to concentrate all his thought and affection in the cause of his country, would have rendered him anxious to have resisted any emotions of the kind, even could he have flattered himself that there was any chance of their being returned by the object of his rising passion. But Iskander was as modest as he was brave and gifted. The disparity of age between himself and Iduna appeared an insuperable barrier to his hopes, even had there been no other obstacle. Iskander struggled with his love, and with his strong mind the struggle, though painful, was not without success. He felt that he was acting in a manner which must ultimately tend to the advantage of his country, the happiness of his friend, and per-

haps the maintenance of his own self-respect. For he had too much pride not to be sensible to the bitterness of rejection.

Had he perceived more indications of a cordial feeling subsisting between Nicæus and Iduna, he would perhaps not have persisted in maintaining his disguise. But he had long suspected that the passion of the Prince of Athens was not too favourably considered by the daughter of Hunniades, and he was therefore exceedingly anxious that Nicæus should possess all the credit of the present adventure, which Iskander scarcely doubted, if successful, would allow Nicæus to urge irresistible claims to the heart of a mistress whom he had rescued at the peril of his life from slavery and dishonour, to offer rank, reputation, and love. Iskander took, therefore, several opportunities of leading Iduna to believe that he was merely a confidential agent of Nicæus, and that the whole plan of her rescue from the Seraglio of Adrianople had been planned by his young friend. In the meantime, during the three days on which they had for short intervals met, very few words had been interchanged between Nicæus and his mistress. Those words, indeed, had been to him of the most inspiring nature, and expressed such a deep sense of gratitude, and such lively regard, that Nicæus could no longer resist the delightful conviction that he had at length created a permanent interest in her heart. Often he longed to rush to her couch, and press her hand to his lips. Even the anticipation of future happiness could not prevent him from envying the good fortune of Iskander, who was allowed to converse with her without restraint; and bitterly, on their return to the khan, did he execrate the pompous eunuch for all the torture

which he occasioned him by his silly conversation, and the petty tyranny of office with which Kaflis always repressed his attempts to converse for a moment with Iduna.

In the meantime all Adrianople sounded with the preparations for the immediate invasion of Epirus, and the return of Iskander to his country became each hour more urgent. Everything being prepared, the adventurers determined on the fourth morning to attempt the rescue. They repaired as usual to the Serail, and were attended by Kaflis to the chamber of the tower, who congratulated Iskander on their way on the rapid convalescence of the captive. When they had fairly entered the chamber, the physician being somewhat in advance, Nicæus, who was behind, commenced proceedings by knocking down the eunuch, and Iskander instantly turning round to his assistance, they succeeded in gagging and binding the alarmed and astonished Kaflis. Iduna then habited herself in a costume exactly similar to that worn by Nicæus, and which her friends had brought to her in their bag. Iskander and Iduna then immediately quitted the Serail without notice or suspicion, and hurried to the khan, where they mounted their horses, that were in readiness, and hastened without a moment's loss of time to a fountain without the gates, where they awaited the arrival of Nicæus with anxiety. After remaining a few minutes in the chamber of the tower, the Prince of Athens stole out, taking care to secure the door upon Kaflis. He descended the staircase, and escaped through the Serail without meeting any one, and had nearly reached the gate of the gardens, when he was challenged by some of the eunuch guard at a little distance.

'Hilloa!' exclaimed one; 'I thought you passed just now?'

'So I did,' replied Nicæus, with nervous effrontery; 'but I came back for my bag, which I left behind,' and, giving them no time to reflect, he pushed his way through the gate with all the impudence of a page. He rushed through the burial-ground, hurried through the streets, mounted his horse, and galloped through the gates. Iskander and Iduna were in sight, he waved his hand for them at once to proceed, and in a moment, without exchanging a word, they were all galloping at full speed, nor did they breathe their horses until sunset.

By nightfall they had reached a small wood of chestnut-trees, where they rested for two hours, more for the sake of their steeds than their own refreshment, for anxiety prevented Iduna from indulging in any repose, as much as excitement prevented her from feeling any fatigue. Iskander lit a fire and prepared their rough meal, unharnessed the horses, and turned them out to their pasture. Nicæus made Iduna a couch of fern, and supported her head, while, in deference to his entreaties, she endeavoured in vain to sleep. Before midnight they were again on their way, and proceeded at a rapid pace towards the mountains, until a few hours before noon, when their horses began to sink under the united influence of their previous exertions and the increasing heat of the day. Iskander looked serious, and often threw a backward glance in the direction of Adrianople.

'We must be beyond pursuit,' said Nicæus. 'I dare say poor Kaflis is still gagged and bound.'

'Could we but reach the mountains,' replied his companion, 'I should have little fear, but I counted

upon our steeds carrying us there without faltering. We cannot reckon upon more than three hours' start, Prince. Our friend Kaflis is too important a personage to be long missed.'

'The Holy Virgin befriend us!' said the Lady Iduna. 'I can urge my poor horse no more.'

They had now ascended a small rising ground, which gave them a wide prospect over the plain. Iskander halted and threw an anxious glance around him.

'There are some horsemen in the distance whom I do not like,' said the physician.

'I see them,' said Nicæus; 'travellers like ourselves.'

'Let us die sooner than be taken,' said Iduna.

'Move on,' said the physician, 'and let me observe these horsemen alone. I would there were some forest at hand. In two hours we may gain the mountains.'

The daughter of Hunniades and the Prince of Athens descended the rising ground. Before them, but at a considerable distance, was a broad and rapid river, crossed by a ruinous Roman bridge. The opposite bank of the river was the termination of a narrow plain, which led immediately to the mountains.

'Fair Iduna, you are safe,' said the Prince of Athens.

'Dear Nicæus,' replied his companion, 'imagine what I feel. It is too wild a moment to express my gratitude.'

'I trust that Iduna will never express her *gratitude* to Nicæus,' answered the Prince; 'it is not, I assure you, a favourite word with him.'

Their companion rejoined them, urging his wearied horse to its utmost speed.

'Nicæus!' he called out, 'halt!'

They stopped their willing horses.

'How now! my friend;' said the Prince; 'you look grave.'

'Lady Iduna!' said the Armenian, 'we are pursued.'

Hitherto the prospect of success, and the consciousness of the terrible destiny that awaited failure, had supported Iduna under exertions, which under any other circumstances must have proved fatal. But to learn, at the very moment that she was congratulating herself on the felicitous completion of their daring enterprise, that that dreaded failure was absolutely impending, demanded too great an exertion of her exhausted energies. She turned pale; she lifted up her imploring hands and eyes to heaven in speechless agony, and then, bending down her head, wept with unrestrained and harrowing violence. The distracted Nicæus sprung from his horse, endeavoured to console the almost insensible Iduna, and then woefully glancing at his fellow adventurer, wrung his hands in despair. His fellow adventurer seemed lost in thought.

'They come,' said Nicæus, starting; 'methinks I see one on the brow of the hill. Away! fly! Let us at least die fighting. Dear, dear Iduna, would that my life could ransom thine! O God! this is indeed agony.'

'Escape is impossible,' said Iduna, in a tone of calmness which astonished them. 'They must overtake us. Alas! brave friends, I have brought ye to this! Pardon me, pardon me! I am ashamed of my selfish

grief. Ascribe it to other causes than a narrow spirit and a weak mind. One course alone is left us. We must not be taken prisoners. Ye are warriors, and can die as such. I am only a woman, but I am the daughter of Hunniades. Nicæus, you are my father's friend; I beseech you sheathe your dagger in my breast.'

The Prince in silent agony pressed his hands to his sight. His limbs quivered with terrible emotion. Suddenly he advanced and threw himself at the feet of his hitherto silent comrade. 'Oh! Iskander!' exclaimed Nicæus, 'great and glorious friend! my head and heart are both too weak for these awful trials; save her, save her!'

'Iskander!' exclaimed the thunderstruck Iduna. 'Iskander!'

'I have, indeed, the misfortune to be Iskander, beloved lady,' he replied. 'This is, indeed, a case almost of desperation, but if I have to endure more than most men, I have, to inspire me, influences which fall to the lot of few, yourself and Epirus. Come! Nicæus, there is but one chance, we must gain the bridge.' Thus speaking, Iskander caught Iduna in his arms, and remounting his steed, and followed by the Prince of Athens, hurried towards the river.

'The water is not fordable,' said Iskander, when they had arrived at its bank. 'The bridge I shall defend; and it will go hard if I do not keep them at bay long enough for you and Iduna to gain the mountains. Away; think no more of me; nay! no tear, dear lady, or you will unman me. An inspiring smile, and all will go well. Hasten to Croia, and let nothing tempt you to linger in the vicinity, with the

hope of my again joining you. Believe me, we shall meet again, but act upon what I say, as if they were my dying words. God bless you, Nicæus! No murmuring. For once let the physician, indeed, command his page. Gentle lady, commend me to your father. Would I had such a daughter in Epirus, to head my trusty brethren if I fall. Tell the great Hunniades my legacy to him is my country. Farewell, farewell!'

'I will not say farewell!' exclaimed Iduna; 'I too can fight. I will stay and die with you.'

'See, they come! Believe me, I shall conquer. Fly, fly, thou noble girl! Guard her well, Nicæus. God bless thee, boy! Live and be happy! Nay, nay, not another word. The farther ye are both distant, trust me, the stronger will be my arm. Indeed, indeed, I do beseech ye, fly!'

Nicæus placed the weeping Iduna in her saddle, and after leading her horse over the narrow and broken bridge, mounted his own, and then they ascended together the hilly and winding track. Iskander watched them as they went. Often Iduna waved her kerchief to her forlorn champion. In the meantime Iskander tore off his Armenian robes and flung them into the river, tried his footing on the position he had taken up, stretched his limbs, examined his daggers, flourished his scimitar.

The bridge would only permit a single rider to pass at a time. It was supported by three arches, the centre one of considerable size, the others small, and rising out of the shallow water on each side. In many parts the parapet wall was broken, in some even the pathway was almost impassable from the masses of fallen stone, and the dangerous fissures. In the centre

of the middle arch was a huge keystone, on which was sculptured, in high relief, an enormous helmet, which indeed gave, among the people of the country, a title to the bridge.

A band of horsemen dashed at full speed, with a loud shout, down the hill. They checked their horses, when to their astonishment they found Iskander with his drawn scimitar, prepared to resist their passage. But they paused only for a moment, and immediately attempted to swim the river. But their exhausted horses drew back with a strong instinct from the rushing waters: one of the band alone, mounted on a magnificent black mare, succeeding in his purpose. The rider was half-way in the stream, his high-bred steed snorting and struggling in the strong current. Iskander, with the same ease as if he were plucking the ripe fruit from a tree, took up a ponderous stone, and hurled it with fatal precision at his adventurous enemy. The rider shrieked and fell, and rose no more: the mare, relieved from her burden, exerted all her failing energies, and succeeded in gaining the opposite bank. There, rolling herself in the welcome pasture, and neighing with a note of triumph, she revelled in her hard escape.

'Cut down the Giaour!' exclaimed one of the horsemen, and he dashed at the bridge. His fragile blade shivered into a thousand pieces as it crossed the scimitar of Iskander, and in a moment his bleeding head fell over the parapet.

Instantly the whole band, each emulous of revenging his comrades, rushed without thought at Iskander, and endeavoured to overpower him by their irresistible charge. His scimitar flashed like light-

ning. The two foremost of his enemies fell, but the impulse of the numbers prevailed, and each instant, although dealing destruction with every blow, he felt himself losing ground. At length he was on the centre of the centre arch, an eminent position, which allowed him for a moment to keep them at bay, and gave him breathing time. Suddenly he made a desperate charge, clove the head of the leader of the band in two, and beat them back several yards; then swiftly returning to his former position, he summoned all his supernatural strength, and stamping on the mighty, but mouldering keystone, he forced it from its form, and broke the masonry of a thousand years. Amid a loud and awful shriek, horses and horsemen, and the dissolving fragments of the scene for a moment mingled as it were in airy chaos, and then plunged with a horrible plash into the fatal depths below. Some fell, and, stunned by the massy fragments, rose no more; others struggled again into light, and gained with difficulty their old shore. Amid them, Iskander, unhurt, swam like a river god, and stabbed to the heart the only strong swimmer that was making his way in the direction of Epirus. Drenched and exhausted, Iskander at length stood upon the opposite margin, and wrung his garments, while he watched the scene of strange destruction.

Three or four exhausted wretches were lying bruised and breathless on the opposite bank: one drowned horse was stranded near them, caught by the rushes. Of all that brave company the rest had vanished, and the broad, and blue, and sunny waters rushed without a shadow beneath the two remaining arches.

'Iduna! thou art safe,' exclaimed Iskander. 'Now for Epirus!' So saying, he seized the black mare, renovated by her bath and pasture, and vaulting on her back, was in a few minutes bounding over his native hills.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Hermit's Guests.

N THE meantime let us not forget the Prince of Athens and the Lady Iduna. These adventurous companions soon lost sight of their devoted champion, and entered a winding ravine, which gradually brought them to the summit of the first chain of the Epirot mountains. From it they looked down upon a vast and rocky valley, through which several mule tracks led in various directions, and entered the highest barrier of the mountains, which rose before them covered with forests of chestnut and ilex. Nicæus chose the track which he considered least tempting to pursuit, and towards sunset they had again entered a ravine washed by a mountain stream. The course of the waters had made the earth fertile and beautiful. Wild shrubs of gay and pleasant colours refreshed their wearied eyesight, and the perfume of aromatic plants invigorated their jaded senses. Upon the bank of the river, too, a large cross of roughly-carved wood brought comfort to their Christian hearts, and while the holy emblem filled them with hope and consolation, and seemed an omen of refuge from

their Moslemin oppressors, a venerable Eremite, with a long white beard descending over his dark robes, and leaning on a staff of thorn, came forth from an adjoining cavern to breathe the evening air and pour forth his evening orisons.

Iduna and Nicæus had hitherto prosecuted their sorrowful journey almost in silence. Exhausted with anxiety, affliction, and bodily fatigue, with difficulty the daughter of Hunniades could preserve her seat upon her steed. One thought alone interested her, and by its engrossing influence maintained her under all her sufferings, the memory of Iskander. Since she first met him, at the extraordinary interview in her father's pavilion, often had the image of the hero recurred to her fancy, often had she mused over his great qualities and strange career. His fame, so dangerous to female hearts, was not diminished by his presence. And now, when Iduna recollected that she was indebted to him for all that she held dear, that she owed to his disinterested devotion, not only life, but all that renders life desirable, honour and freedom, country and kindred, that image was invested with associations and with sentiments, which, had Iskander himself been conscious of their existence, would have leant redoubled vigor to his arm, and fresh inspiration to his energy. More than once Iduna had been on the point of inquiring of Nicæus the reason which had induced alike him and Iskander to preserve so strictly the disguise of his companion. But a feeling which she did not choose to analyse, struggled successfully with her curiosity: she felt a reluctance to speak of Iskander to the Prince of Athens. In the meantime Nicæus himself was not apparently very anxious of conversing upon the subject, and after the first rapid expres-

sions of fear and hope as to the situation of their late comrade, they relapsed into silence, seldom broken by Nicæus, but to deplore the sufferings of his mistress, lamentations which Iduna answered with a faint smile.

The refreshing scene wherein they had now entered, and the cheering appearance of the Eremite, were subjects of mutual congratulation; and Nicæus, somewhat advancing, claimed the attention of the holy man, announcing their faith, imprisonment, escape, and sufferings, and entreating hospitality and refuge. The Eremite pointed with his staff to the winding path, which ascended the bank of the river to the cavern, and welcomed the pilgrims, in the name of their blessed Saviour, to his wild abode and simple fare.

The cavern widened when they entered, and comprised several small apartments. It was a work of the early Christians, who had found a refuge in their days of persecution, and art had completed the beneficent design of nature. The cavern was fresh, and sweet, and clean. Heaven smiled upon its pious inmate through an aperture in the roof; the floor was covered with rushes; in one niche rested a brazen cross, and in another a perpetual lamp burnt before a picture, where Madonna smiled with meek tenderness upon her young divinity.

The Eremite placed upon a block of wood, the surface of which he had himself smoothed, some honey, some dried fish, and a wooden bowl filled from the pure stream that flowed beneath them: a simple meal, but welcome. His guests seated themselves upon a rushy couch, and while they refreshed themselves, he gently inquired the history of their adventures. As it was evident that the Eremite, from her apparel,

mistook the sex of Iduna, Nicæus thought fit not to undeceive him, but passed her off as his brother. He described themselves as two Athenian youths, who had been captured while serving as volunteers under the great Hunniades, and who had effected their escape from Adrianople under circumstances of great peril and difficulty; and when he had gratified the Eremite's curiosity respecting their Christian brethren in Paynim lands, and sympathetically marvelled with him at the advancing fortunes of the Crescent, Nicæus, who perceived that Iduna stood in great need of rest, mentioned the fatigues of his more fragile brother, and requested permission for him to retire. Whereupon the Eremite himself, fetching a load of fresh rushes, arranged them in one of the cells, and invited the fair Iduna to repose. The daughter of Hunniades, first humbling herself before the altar of the Virgin, and offering her gratitude for all the late mercies vouchsafed unto her, and then bidding a word of peace to her host and her companion, withdrew to her hard-earned couch, and soon was buried in a sleep as sweet and innocent as herself.

But repose fell not upon the eyelids of Nicæus in spite of all his labours. The heart of the Athenian Prince was distracted by the two most powerful of passions, love and jealousy; and when the Eremite, pointing out to his guest his allotted resting-place, himself retired to his regular and simple slumbers, Nicæus quitted the cavern, and standing upon the bank of the river, gazed in abstraction upon the rushing waters foaming in the moonlight. The Prince of Athens, with many admirable qualities, was one of those men who are influenced only by their passions, and who, in the affairs of life, are invariably guided by

their imagination instead of their reason. At present all thought and feeling, all considerations, and all circumstances, merged in the overpowering love he entertained for Iduna, his determination to obtain her at all cost and peril, and his resolution that she should never again meet Iskander, except as the wife of Nicæus. Compared with this paramount object, the future seemed to vanish. The emancipation of his country, the welfare of his friend, even the maintenance of his holy creed, all those great and noble objects for which, under other circumstances, he would have been prepared to sacrifice his fortune and his life, no longer interested or influenced him; and while the legions of the Crescent were on the point of pouring into Greece to crush that patriotic and Christian cause over which Iskander and himself had so often mused, whose interests the disinterested absence of Iskander, occasioned solely by his devotion to Nicæus, had certainly endangered, and perhaps, could the events of the last few hours be known, even sacrificed, the Prince of Athens resolved, unless Iduna would consent to become his, at once to carry off the daughter of Hunniades to some distant country. Nor indeed, even with his easily excited vanity, was Nicæus sanguine of obtaining his purpose by less violent means. He was already a rejected suitor, and under circumstances which scarcely had left hope. Nothing but the sole credit of her chivalric rescue could perhaps have obtained for him the interest in the heart of Iduna which he coveted. For while this exploit proffered an irresistible claim to her deepest gratitude, it indicated also, on the part of her deliverer, the presence and possession of all those great qualities, the absence of which in the character and

conduct of her suitor, Iduna had not, at a former period, endeavoured to conceal to be the principal cause of his rejection. And now, by the unhappy course of circumstances, the very deed on which he counted, with sanguine hope, as the sure means of his success, seemed, as it were, to have placed him in a still inferior situation than before. The constant society of his mistress had fanned to all its former force and ardour the flame which, apart from her and hopeless, he had endeavoured to repress; while, on the other hand, he could not conceal from himself, that Iduna must feel that he had played in these great proceedings but a secondary part; that all the genius and all the generosity of the exploit rested with Iskander, who, after having obtained her freedom by so much energy, peril, sagacity and skill, had secured it by a devoted courage which might shame all the knights of Christendom; perhaps, too, had secured it by his own life.

What if Iskander were no more? It was a great contingency. The eternal servitude of Greece, and the shameful triumph of the Crescent, were involved, perhaps, in that single event. And could the possession of Iduna compensate for such disgrace and infamy? Let us not record the wild response of passion.

It was midnight ere the restless Nicæus, more exhausted by his agitating reverie than by his previous exertions, returned into the cavern, and found refuge in sleep from all his disquietudes.

CHAPTER XIV.

An Unwelcome Avowal.

THE Eremite rose with the sun; and while he was yet at matins, was joined by Iduna, refreshed and cheerful after her unusual slumbers. After performing their devotions, her venerable host proposed that they should go forth and enjoy the morning air. So, descending the precipitous bank of the river, he led the way to a small glen, the bed of a tributary rivulet, now nearly exhausted. Beautiful clumps of birch-trees, and tall thin poplars, rose on each side among the rocks, which were covered with bright mosses, and parasitical plants of gay and various colours. One side of the glen was touched with the golden and grateful beams of the rising sun, and the other was in deep shadow.

'Here you can enjoy nature and freedom in security;' said the Eremite, 'for your enemies, if they have not already given up their pursuit, will scarcely search this sweet solitude.'

'It is indeed sweet, holy father,' said Iduna; 'but the captive, who has escaped from captivity, can alone feel all its sweetness.'

'It is true,' said the Eremite; 'I also have been a captive.'

'Indeed! holy father. To the Infidels?'

'To the Infidels, gentle pilgrim.'

'Have you been at Adrianople?'

'My oppressors were not the Paynim,' replied the Eremite, 'but they were enemies far more dire, my own evil passions. Time was when my eye sparkled like thine, gentle pilgrim, and my heart was not as pure.'

'God is merciful,' said Iduna, 'and without His aid, the strongest are but shadows.'

'Ever think so,' replied the Eremite, 'and you will deserve rather His love than His mercy. Thirty long years have I spent in this solitude, meditating upon the past, and it is a theme yet fertile in instruction. My hours are never heavy, and memory is to me what action is to other men.'

'You have seen much, holy father?'

'And felt more. Yet you will perhaps think the result of all my experience very slight, for I can only say unto thee, trust not in thyself.'

'It is a great truth,' remarked Iduna, 'and leads to a higher one.'

'Even so,' replied the Eremite. 'We are full of wisdom in old age, as in winter this river is full of water, but the fire of youth, like the summer sun, dries up the stream.'

Iduna did not reply. The Eremite attracted her attention to a patch of cresses on the opposite bank of the stream. 'Every morning I rise only to discover fresh instances of omnipotent benevolence,' he exclaimed. 'Yesterday ye tasted my honey and my fish. To-day I can offer ye a fresh dainty. We will

break our fast in this pleasant glen. Rest thou here, gentle youth, and I will summon thy brother to our meal. I fear me much he does not bear so contented a spirit as thyself.'

'He is older, and has seen more,' replied Iduna.

The Eremite shook his head, and leaning on his staff, returned to the cavern. Iduna remained, seated on a mossy rock, listening to the awakening birds, and musing over the fate of Iskander. While she was indulging in this reverie, her name was called. She looked up with a blush, and beheld Nicæus.

'How fares my gentle comrade?' inquired the Prince of Athens.

'As well as I hope you are, dear Nicæus. We have been indeed fortunate in finding so kind a host.'

'I think I may now congratulate you on your safety,' said the Prince. 'This unfrequented pass will lead us in two days to Epirus, nor do I indeed now fear pursuit.'

'Acts and not words must express in future how much we owe to you,' said Iduna. 'My joy would be complete if my father only knew of our safety, and if our late companion were here to share it.'

'Fear not for my friend,' replied Nicæus. 'I have faith in the fortune of Iskander.'

'If any one could succeed under such circumstances, he doubtless is the man,' rejoined Iduna; 'but it was indeed an awful crisis in his fate.'

'Trust me, dear lady, it is wise to banish gloomy thoughts.'

'We can give him only our thoughts,' said Iduna, 'and when we remember how much is dependent on his life, can they be cheerful?'

'Mine must be so, when I am in the presence of Iduna,' replied Nicæus.

The daughter of Hunniades gathered moss from the rock, and threw it into the stream.

'Dear lady,' said the Prince of Athens, seating himself by her side, and stealing her gentle hand. 'Pardon me, if an irrepressible feeling at this moment impels me to recur to a subject, which, I would fain hope, were not so unpleasing to you, as once unhappily you deemed it. O! Iduna, best and dearest, we are once more together; once more I gaze upon that unrivalled form, and listen to the music of that matchless voice. I sought you, I perhaps violated my pledge, but I sought you in captivity and sorrow. Pardon me, pity me, Iduna! O! Iduna, if possible, love me!'

She turned away her head, she turned away her streaming eyes. 'It is impossible not to love my deliverer,' she replied, in a low and tremulous voice, 'even could he not prefer the many other claims to affection which are possessed by the Prince of Athens. I was not prepared for this renewal of a painful subject, perhaps not under any circumstances, but least of all under those in which we now find ourselves.'

'Alas!' exclaimed the Prince, 'I can no longer control my passion. My life, not my happiness merely, depends upon Iduna becoming mine. Bear with me, beloved, bear with me! Were you Nicæus, you too would need forgiveness.'

'I beseech you, cease!' exclaimed Iduna, in a firmer voice; and, withdrawing her hand, she suddenly rose. 'This is neither the time nor place for such conversation. I have not forgotten that, but a few days back, I was a hopeless captive, and that

my life and fame are even now in danger. Great mercies have been vouchsafed to me; but still I perhaps need the hourly interposition of heavenly aid. Other than such worldly thoughts should fill my mind, and do. Dear Nicæus,' she continued, in a soothing tone, 'you have nobly commenced a most heroic enterprise: fulfil it in like spirit.'

He would have replied; but at this moment the staff of the Eremite sounded among the rocks. Baffled, and dark with rage and passion, the Prince of Athens quitted Iduna, and strolled towards the upper part of the glen, to conceal his anger and disappointment.

'Eat, gentle youth,' said the Eremite. 'Will not thy brother join us? What may be his name?'

'Nicæus, holy father.'

'And thine?'

Iduna blushed and hesitated. At length, in her confusion, she replied, 'Iskander.'

'Nicæus!' called out the Eremite, 'Iskander and myself await thee!'

Iduna trembled. She was agreeably surprised when the Prince returned with a smiling countenance, and joined in the meal, with many cheerful words.

'Now, I propose,' said the Eremite, 'that yourself and your brother Iskander should tarry with me some days, if, indeed, my simple fare have any temptation.'

'I thank thee, holy father,' replied Nicæus, 'but our affairs are urgent; nor indeed could I have tarried here at all, had it not been for my young Iskander here, who, as you may easily believe, is little accustomed to his late exertions. But, indeed, towards sunset, we must proceed.'

'Bearing with us,' added Iduna, 'a most grateful recollection of our host.'

'God be with ye, wherever ye may proceed,' replied the Eremite.

'My trust is indeed in Him,' rejoined Iduna.

CHAPTER XV.

Affairs of State.

AND so, two hours before sunset, mounting their refreshed horses, Nicæus and Iduna quitted, with many kind words, the cavern of the Eremite, and took their way along the winding bank of the river. Throughout the moonlit night they travelled, ascending the last and highest chain of mountains, and reaching the summit by dawn. The cheerful light of morning revealed to them the happy plains of a Christian country. With joyful spirits they descended into the fertile land, and stopped at a beautiful Greek village, embowered in orchards and groves of olive-trees.

The Prince of Athens instantly inquired for the Primate, or chief personage of the village, and was conducted to his house; but its master, he was informed, was without, supervising the commencement of the vintage. Leaving Iduna with the family of the Primate, Nicæus went in search of him. The vineyard was full of groups, busied in the most elegant and joyous of human occupations, gathering, with infinite bursts of merriment, the harvest of the vine. Some mounted on ladders, fixed against the

festooning branches, plucked the rich bunches, and threw them below, where girls, singing in chorus, caught them in panniers, or their extended drapery. In the centre of the vineyard, a middle-aged man watched with a calm, but vigilant eye, the whole proceedings, and occasionally stimulated the indolent, or prompted the inexperienced.

'Christo!' said the Prince of Athens, when he had approached him. The Primate turned round, but evidently did not immediately recognise the person who addressed him.

'I see,' continued the Prince, 'that my meditated caution was unnecessary. My strange garb is a sufficient disguise.'

'The Prince Nicæus!' exclaimed the Primate. 'He is, indeed, disguised, but will, I am sure, pardon his faithful servant.'

'Not a word, Christo!' replied the Prince. 'To be brief, I have crossed the mountains from Roumelia, and have only within this hour recognised the spot whither I have chanced to arrive. I have a companion with me. I would not be known. You comprehend? Affairs of state. I take it for granted that there are none here who will recognise me, after three years' absence, in this dress.'

'You may feel secure, my lord,' replied Christo. 'If you puzzled me, who have known you since you were no bigger than this bunch of grapes, you will quite confound the rest.'

''Tis well. I shall stay here a day or two, in order to give them an opportunity to prepare for my reception. In the meantime, it is necessary to send on a courier at once. You must manage all this for me, Christo. How are your daughters?'

'So, so, please your highness,' replied Christo. 'A man with seven daughters has got trouble for every day in the week.'

'But not when they are so pretty as yours are!'

'Poh! poh! handsome is that handsome does; and as for Alexina, she wants to be married.'

'Very natural. Let her marry, by all means.'

'But Helena wants to do the same.'

'More natural still; for, if possible, she is prettier. For my part, I could marry them both.'

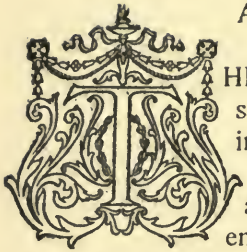
'Ay, ay! that is all very well; but handsome is that handsome does. I have no objection to Alexina marrying, and even Helena; but then there is Lais——'

'Hah! hah! hah!' exclaimed the prince. 'I see, my dear Christo, that my foster sisters give you a very proper portion of trouble. However, I must be off to my travelling companion. Come in as soon as you can, my dear fellow, and we will settle everything. A good vintage to you, and only as much mischief as necessary.' So saying, the Prince tripped away.

'Well! who would have thought of seeing him here!' exclaimed the worthy Primate. 'The same gay dog as ever! What can he have been doing in Roumelia? Affairs of state, indeed! I'll wager my new Epiphany scarf, that, whatever the affairs are, there is a pretty girl in the case.'

CHAPTER XVI.

A New Lodging.



HE fair Iduna, after all her perils and sufferings, was at length sheltered in safety under a kind and domestic roof. Alexina, and Helena, and Lais, and all the other sisters emulated each other in the attentions which they lavished upon the two brothers, but especially the youngest. Their kindness, indeed, was only equalled by their ceaseless curiosity, and had they ever waited for the answers of Iduna to their questions, the daughter of Hunniades might, perhaps, have been somewhat puzzled to reconcile her responses with probability. Helena answered the questions of Alexina: Lais anticipated even Helena. All that Iduna had to do was to smile and be silent, and it was universally agreed that Iskander was singularly shy as well as excessively handsome. In the meantime, when Nicæus met Iduna in the evening of the second day of their visit, he informed her that he had been so fortunate as to resume an acquaintance with an old companion in arms in the person of a neighbouring noble, who had invited them to rest at his

castle at the end of their next day's journey. He told her likewise that he had dispatched a courier to Croia to enquire after Iskander, who, he expected, in the course of a very few days, would bring them intelligence to guide their future movements, and decide whether they should at once proceed to the capital of Epirus, or advance into Bulgaria, in case Hunniades was still in the field. On the morrow, therefore, they proceeded on their journey. Nicæus had procured a litter for Iduna, for which her delicate health was an excuse to Alexina and her sisters, and they were attended by a small body of well-armed cavalry, for, according to the accounts which Nicæus had received, the country was still disturbed. They departed at break of day, Nicæus riding by the side of the litter, and occasionally making anxious inquiries after the well-being of his fair charge. An hour after noon they rested at a well, surrounded by olive-trees, until the extreme heat was somewhat allayed; and then remounting, proceeded in the direction of an undulating ridge of green hills, that partially intersected the wide plain. Towards sunset the Prince of Athens withdrew the curtains of the litter, and called the attention of Iduna to a very fair castle, rising on a fertile eminence, and sparkling in the quivering beams of dying light.

'I fear,' said Nicæus, 'that my friend Justinian will scarcely have returned, but we are old comrades, and he desired me to act as his seneschal. For your sake I am sorry, Iduna, for I feel convinced that he would please you.'

'It is, indeed, a fair castle,' replied Iduna, 'and none but a true knight deserves such a noble residence.'

While she spoke the commander of the escort sounded his bugle, and they commenced the ascent of the steep, a winding road, cut through a thick wood of evergreen shrubs. The gradual and easy ascent soon brought them to a portal flanked with towers, which admitted them into the outworks of the fortification. Here they found several soldiers on guard, and the commander again sounding his bugle, the gates of the castle opened, and the seneschal, attended by a suite of many domestics, advanced and welcomed Nicæus and Iduna. The Prince of Athens dismounting, assisted his fair companion from the litter, and leading her by the hand, and preceded by the seneschal, entered the castle.

They passed through a magnificent hall, hung with choice armour, and ascending a staircase of Pentelic marble, were ushered into a suite of lofty chambers, lined with Oriental tapestry, and furnished with many costly couches, and cabinets. While they admired a spectacle so different to anything they had recently beheld or experienced, the seneschal, followed by a number of slaves in splendid attire, advanced and offered them rare and choice refreshments, coffee and confectionery, sherbets and spiced wines. When they had partaken of this elegant cheer, Nicæus intimated to the seneschal that the Lady Iduna might probably wish to retire, and instantly a discreet matron, followed by six beautiful girls, each bearing a fragrant torch of cinnamon and roses, advanced and offered to conduct the Lady Iduna to her apartments.

The matron and her company of maidens conducted the daughter of Hunniades down a long gallery, which led to a suite of the prettiest chambers in the world. The first was an antechamber, painted

like a bower, but filled with the music of living birds; the second, which was much larger, was entirely covered with Venetian mirrors, and resting on a bright Persian carpet were many couches of crimson velvet, covered with a variety of sumptuous dresses; the third room was a bath, made in the semblance of a gigantic shell. Its roof was of transparent alabaster, glowing with shadowy light.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Evening Feast.

A FLOURISH of trumpets announced the return of the Lady Iduna; and the Prince of Athens, magnificently attired, came forward with a smile, and led her, with a compliment on her resuming the dress of her sex, if not of her country, to the banquet. Iduna was not uninfluenced by that excitement which is insensibly produced by a sudden change of scene and circumstances, and especially by an unexpected transition from hardship, peril, and suffering, to luxury, security and enjoyment. Their spirits were elevated and gay; she smiled upon Nicæus with a cheerful sympathy. They feasted, they listened to sweet music, they talked over their late adventures, and, animated by their own enjoyment, they became more sanguine as to the fate of Iskander.

'In two or three days we shall know more,' said Nicæus. 'In the meantime, rest is absolutely necessary to you. It is only now that you will begin to be sensible of the exertion you have made. If Iskander be at Croia, he has already informed your father of your escape; if he have not arrived, I have

arranged that a courier shall be dispatched to Hunniades from that city. Do not be anxious. Try to be happy. I am myself sanguine that you will find all well. Come, pledge me your father's health, fair lady, in this goblet of Tenedos!'

'How know I that at this moment he may not be at the point of death,' replied Iduna. 'When I am absent from those I love, I dream only of their unhappiness.'

'At this moment also,' rejoined Nicæus, 'he dreams perhaps of your imprisonment among barbarians. Yet how mistaken! Let that consideration support you. Come! here is to the Eremite.'

'As willing, if not as sumptuous, a host as our present one,' said Iduna; 'and when, by-the-bye, do you think that your friend, the Lord Justinian, will arrive?'

'Oh! never mind him,' said Nicæus. 'He would have arrived to-morrow, but the great news which I gave him has probably changed his plans. I told him of the approaching invasion, and he has perhaps found it necessary to visit the neighbouring chieftains, or even to go on to Croia.'

'Well-a-day!' exclaimed Iduna, 'I would we were in my father's camp!'

'We shall soon be there, dear lady,' replied the Prince. 'Come, worthy seneschal,' he added, turning to that functionary, 'drink to this noble lady's happy meeting with her friends.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

Iduna Again a Captive.

THREE or four days passed away at the castle of Justinian, in which Nicæus used his utmost exertions to divert the anxiety of Iduna. One day was spent in examining the castle, on another he amused her with a hawking party, on a third he carried her to the neighbouring ruins of a temple, and read his favorite Æschylus to her amid its lone and elegant columns. It was impossible for any one to be more amiable and entertaining, and Iduna could not resist recognising his many virtues and accomplishments. The courier had not yet returned from Croia, which Nicæus accounted for by many satisfactory reasons. The suspense, however, at length became so painful to Iduna, that she proposed to the Prince of Athens that they should, without further delay, proceed to that city. As usual, Nicæus was not wanting in many plausible arguments in favour of their remaining at the castle, but Iduna was resolute.

'Indeed, dear Nicæus,' she said, 'my anxiety to see my father, or hear from him, is so great, that there is scarcely any danger which I would not encounter to

gratify my wish. I feel that I have already taxed your endurance too much. But we are no longer in a hostile land, and guards and guides are to be engaged. Let me then depart alone!'

'Iduna!' exclaimed Nicæus, reproachfully. 'Alas! Iduna, you are cruel, but I did not expect this!'

'Dear Nicæus!' she answered, 'you always misinterpret me! It would infinitely delight me to be restored to Hunniades by yourself, but these are no common times, and you are no common person. You forget that there is one that has greater claims upon you even than a forlorn maiden—your country. And whether Iskander be at Croia or not, Greece requires the presence and exertions of the Prince of Athens.'

'I have no country,' replied Nicæus, mournfully, 'and no object for which to exert myself.'

'Nicæus! Is this the poetic patriot who was yesterday envying Themistocles?'

'Alas! Iduna, yesterday you were my muse. I do not wonder you are wearied of this castle,' continued the Prince in a melancholy tone. 'This spot contains nothing to interest you; but for me, it holds all that is dear, and, O! gentle maiden, one smile from you, one smile of inspiration, and I would not envy Themistocles, and might perhaps rival him.'

They were walking together in the hall of the castle; Iduna stepped aside and affected to examine a curious buckler, Nicæus followed her, and placing his arm gently in hers, led her away.

'Dearest Iduna,' he said, 'pardon me, but men struggle for their fate. Mine is in your power. It is a contest between misery and happiness, glory and perhaps infamy. Do not then wonder that I will not yield my chance of the brighter fortune without an

effort. Once more I appeal to your pity, if not to your love. Were Iduna mine, were she to hold out but the possibility of her being mine, there is no career, solemnly I avow what solemnly I feel, there is no career of which I could not be capable, and no condition to which I would not willingly subscribe. But this certainty, or this contingency, I must have: I cannot exist without the alternative. And now, upon my knees, I implore her to grant it to me!'

'Nicæus,' said Iduna, 'this continued recurrence to a forbidden subject is most ungenerous.'

'Alas! Iduna, my life depends upon a word, which you will not speak, and you talk of generosity. No! Iduna, it is not I that am ungenerous.'

'Let me say then unreasonable, Prince Nicæus.'

'Say what you like, Iduna, provided that you say that you are mine.'

'Pardon me, sir, I am free.'

'Free! You have ever underrated me, Iduna. To whom do you owe this boasted freedom?'

'This is not the first time,' remarked Iduna, 'that you have reminded me of an obligation, the memory of which is indelibly impressed upon my heart, and for which even the present conversation cannot make me feel less grateful. I can never forget that I owe all that is dear to yourself and your companion.'

'My companion!' replied the Prince of Athens, pale and passionate. 'My companion! Am I ever to be reminded of my companion?'

'Nicæus!' said Iduna; 'if you forget what is due to me, at least endeavour to remember what is due to yourself?'

'Beautiful being!' said the Prince, advancing and passionately seizing her hand; 'pardon me! pardon

me! I am not master of my reason! I am nothing, I am nothing while Iduna hesitates!'

'She does not hesitate, Nicæus. I desire, I require, that this conversation shall cease; shall never, never be renewed.'

'And I tell thee, haughty woman,' said the Prince of Athens, grinding his teeth, and speaking with violent action, 'that I will no longer be despised with impunity. Iduna is mine, or is no one else's.'

'Is it possible?' exclaimed the daughter of Hunniades. 'Is it, indeed, come to this? But why am I surprised? I have long known Nicæus. I quit this castle instantly.'

'You are a prisoner,' replied the Prince calmly, and leaning with folded arms against the wall.

'A prisoner!' exclaimed Iduna, a little alarmed. 'A prisoner! I defy you, sir. You are only a guest like myself. I will appeal to the seneschal in the absence of his lord. He will never permit the honour of his master's flag to be violated by the irrational caprice of a passionate boy.'

'What lord?' inquired Nicæus.

'Your friend, the Lord Justinian,' answered Iduna. 'He could little anticipate such an abuse of his hospitality.'

'My friend, the Lord Justinian!' replied Nicæus, with a malignant smile. 'I am surprised that a personage of the Lady Iduna's dear discrimination should so easily be deceived by "a passionate boy!" Is it possible that you could have supposed for a moment that there was any other lord of this castle save your devoted slave?'

'What!' exclaimed Iduna, really frightened.

'I have, indeed, the honour of finding the Lady

Iduna my guest,' continued Nicæus, in a tone of bitter raillery. 'This castle of Kallista, the fairest in all Epirus, I inherit from my mother. Of late I have seldom visited it; but, indeed, it will become a favourite residence of mine, if it be, as I anticipate, the scene of my nuptial ceremony.'

Iduna looked around her with astonishment, then threw herself upon a couch and burst into tears. The Prince of Athens walked up and down the hall with an air of determined coolness.

'Perfidious!' exclaimed Iduna between her sobs.

'Lady Iduna,' said the prince, and he seated himself by her side, 'I will not attempt to palliate a deception which your charms could alone inspire and can alone justify. Here me, Lady Iduna, hear me with calmness. I love you; I love you with a passion which has been as constant as it is strong. My birth, my rank, my fortunes, do not disqualify me for an union with the daughter of the great Hunniades. If my personal claims may sink in comparison with her surpassing excellence, I am yet to learn that any other prince in Christendom can urge a more effective plea. I am young; the ladies of the court have called me handsome; by your great father's side I have broken some lances in your honour; and even Iduna once confessed she thought me clever. Come, come, be merciful! Let my beautiful Athens receive a fitting mistress! A holy father is in readiness, dear maiden. Come now, one smile! In a few days we shall reach your father's camp, and then we will kneel, as I do now, and beg a blessing on our happy union.' As he spoke he dropped upon his knee, and stealing her hand, looked into her face. It was sorrowful and gloomy.

'It is in vain, Nicæus,' said Iduna, 'to appeal to your generosity; it is useless to talk of the past; it is idle to reproach you for the present. I am a woman, alone and persecuted, where I could least anticipate persecution. Nicæus, I never can be yours; and now I deliver myself to the mercy of Almighty God.'

''Tis well,' said Nicæus. 'From the tower of the castle you may behold the waves of the Ionian Sea. You will remain here a close prisoner, until one of my galleys arrives from Piræus to bear us to Italy. Mine you must be, Iduna. It remains for you to decide under what circumstances. Continue in your obstinancy, and you may bid farewell for ever to your country and to your father. Be reasonable, and a destiny awaits you, which offers everything that has hitherto been considered the source or cause of happiness.' Thus speaking, the Prince retired, leaving the Lady Iduna to her own unhappy thoughts.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Valiant Maiden.

THE Lady Iduna was at first inclined to view the conduct of the Prince of Athens, as one of those passionate and passing ebullitions in which her long acquaintance with him had taught her he was accustomed to indulge. But when on retiring soon after to her apartments, she was informed by her attendant matron that she must in future consider herself a prisoner, and not venture again to quit them without permission, she began to tremble at the possible violence of an ill-regulated mind. She endeavoured to interest her attendant in her behalf; but the matron was too well schooled to evince any feeling or express any opinion on the subject; and indeed, at length, fairly informed Iduna that she was commanded to confine her conversation to the duties of her office.

The Lady Iduna was very unhappy. She thought of her father, she thought of Iskander. The past seemed a dream; she was often tempted to believe that she was still, and had ever been, a prisoner in the Serail of Adrianople; and that all the late wonder-

ful incidents of her life were but the shifting scenes of some wild slumber. And then some slight incident, the sound of a bell, or the sight of some holy emblem, assured her she was in a Christian land, and convinced her of the strange truth that she was indeed in captivity, and a prisoner, above all others, to the fond companion of her youth. Her indignation at the conduct of Nicæus roused her courage; she resolved to make an effort to escape. Her rooms were lighted only from above; she determined to steal forth at night into the gallery; the door was secured. She hastened back to her chamber in fear and sorrow, and wept.

Twice in the course of the day the stern and silent matron visited Iduna with her food; and as she retired, secured the door. This was the only individual that the imprisoned lady ever beheld. And thus heavily rolled on up[illegible]ds of a week. On the eve of the ninth day, Iduna was surprised by the matron presenting her a letter as she quitted the chamber for the night. Iduna seized it with a feeling of curiosity not unmixed with pleasure. It was the only incident that had occurred during her captivity. She recognised the handwriting of Nicæus, and threw it down with vexation at her silliness in supposing, for a moment, that the matron could have been the emissary of any other person.

Yet the letter must be read, and at length she opened it. It informed her that a ship had arrived from Athens at the coast, and that to-morrow she must depart for Italy. It told her also, that the Turks, under Mahomed, had invaded Albania; and that the Hungarians, under the command of her father, had come to support the Cross. It said nothing of Iskan-

der. But it reminded her that little more than the same time that would carry her to the coast to embark for a foreign land, would, were she wise, alike enable Nicæus to place her in her father's arms, and allow him to join in the great struggle for his country and his creed. The letter was written with firmness, but tenderly. It left, however, on the mind of Iduna an impression of the desperate resolution of the writer.

Now it so happened, that as this unhappy lady jumped from her couch, and paced the room in the perturbation of her mind, the wind of her drapery extinguished her lamp. As her attendant, or visitor, had paid her last visit for the day, there seemed little chance of its being again illumined. The miserable are always more unhappy in the dark. Light is the greatest of comforters. And so this little misfortune seemed to the forlorn Iduna almost overwhelming. And as she attempted to look around, and wrung her hands in very woe, her attention was attracted by a brilliant streak of light upon the wall, which greatly surprised her. She groped her way in its direction, and slowly stretching forth her hand, observed that it made its way through a chink in the frame of one of the great mirrors which were inlaid in the wall. And as she pressed the frame, she felt to her surprise that it sprang forward. Had she not been very cautious the advancing mirror would have struck her with great force, but she had presence of mind to withdraw her hand very gradually, repressing the swiftness of the spring. The aperture occasioned by the opening of the mirror consisted of a recess, formed by a closed-up window. An old wooden shutter, or blind, in so ruinous a state, that the light freely made

its way, was the only barrier against the elements. Iduna, seizing the handle which remained, at once drew it open with little difficulty.

The captive gazed with gladdened feelings upon the free and beautiful scene. Beneath her rose the rich and aromatic shrubs tinged with the soft and silver light of eve: before her extended the wide and fertile champaign, skirted by the dark and undulating mountains: in the clear sky, glittering and sharp, sparkled the first crescent of the new moon, an auspicious omen to the Moslemin invaders.

Iduna gazed with joy upon the landscape, and then hastily descending from the recess, she placed her hands to her eyes, so long unaccustomed to the light. Perhaps, too, she indulged in momentary meditation. For suddenly seizing a number of shawls which were lying on one of the couches, she knotted them together, and then, striving with all her force, she placed the heaviest couch on one end of the costly cord, and then throwing the other out of the window, and entrusting herself to the merciful care of the holy Virgin, the brave daughter of Hunniades successfully dropped down into the garden below.

She stopped to breathe, and to revel in her emancipated existence. It was a bold enterprise gallantly achieved. But the danger had now only commenced. She found that she had alighted at the back of the castle. She stole along upon tip-toe, timid as a fawn. She remembered a small wicket-gate that led into the open country. She arrived at the gate. It was of course guarded. The single sentinel was kneeling before an image of St. George, beside him was an empty drinking-cup and an exhausted wine-skin.

'Holy Saint!' exclaimed the pious sentinel, 'preserve us from all Turkish infidels!' Iduna stole behind him. 'Shall men who drink no wine conquer true Christians!' continued the sentinel. Iduna placed her hand upon the lock. 'We thank thee for our good vintage,' said the sentinel. Iduna opened the gate with the noiseless touch which a feminine finger can alone command. 'And for the rise of the Lord Iskander!' added the sentinel. Iduna escaped!

Now she indeed was free. Swiftly she ran over the wide plain. She hoped to reach some town or village before her escape could be discovered, and she hurried on for three hours without resting. She came to a beautiful grove of olive-trees that spread in extensive ramifications about the plain. And through this beautiful grove of olive-trees her path seemed to lead. So she entered and advanced. And when she had journeyed for about a mile, she came to an open and verdant piece of ground, which was, as it were, the heart of the grove. In its centre rose a fair and antique structure of white marble, shrouding from the noon-day sun the perennial flow of a famous fountain. It was near midnight. Iduna was wearied, and she sat down upon the steps of the fountain for rest. And while she was musing over all the strange adventures of her life, she heard a rustling in the wood, and being alarmed, she rose and hid herself behind a tree.

And while she stood there, with palpitating heart, the figure of a man advanced to the fountain from an opposite direction of the grove. He went up the steps, and looked down upon the spring as if he were about to drink, but instead of doing that, he drew his scimitar, and plunged it into the water, and called out with a loud voice the name of 'Iskander!' three times.

Whereupon Iduna actuated by an irresistible impulse, came forward from her hiding place, but instantly gave a loud shriek when she beheld the Prince Mahomed!

'O! night of glory!' exclaimed the Prince, advancing. 'Do I indeed behold the fair Iduna! This is truly magic!'

'Away! away!' exclaimed the distracted Iduna, as she endeavoured to fly from him.

'He has kept his word, that cunning leech, better than I expected,' said Mahomed, seizing her.

'As well as you deserve, ravisher!' exclaimed a majestic voice. A tall figure rushed forward from the wood, and dashed back the Turk.

'I am here to complete my contract, Prince Mahomed,' said the stranger, drawing his sword.

'Iskander!' exclaimed the prince.

'We have met before, Prince. Let us so act now that we may meet for the last time.'

'Infamous, infernal traitor,' exclaimed Mahomed, 'dost thou, indeed, imagine that I will sully my imperial blade with the blood of my runaway slave! No! I came here to secure thy punishment, but I cannot condescend to become thy punisher. Advance, guards, and seize him! Seize them both!'

Iduna flew to Iskander, who caught her in one arm, while he waved his scimitar with the other. The guards of Mahomed poured forth from the side of the grove whence the Prince had issued.

'And dost thou indeed think, Mahomed,' said Iskander, 'that I have been educated in the Seraglio to be duped by Moslem craft? I offer thee single combat if thou desirest it, but combat as we may, the struggle shall be equal.' He whistled, and instantly a body of

Hungarians, headed by Hunniades himself, advanced from the side of the grove whence Iskander had issued.

'Come on, then,' said Mahomed; 'each to his man.' Their swords clashed, but the principal attendants of the son of Amurath deeming the affair under the present circumstances assumed the character of a mere rash adventure, bore away the Turkish prince.

'To-morrow, then, this fray shall be decided on the plains of Kallista,' said Mahomed.

'Epirus is prepared,' replied Iskander.

The Turks withdrew. Iskander bore the senseless form of Iduna to her father. Hunniades embraced his long-lost child. They sprinkled her face with water from the fountain. She revived.

'Where is Nicæus?' inquired Iskander; 'and how came you again, dear lady, in the power of Mahomed?'

'Alas! noble sir, my twice deliverer,' answered Iduna, 'I have, indeed, again been doomed to captivity, but my persecutor, I blush to say, was this time a Christian prince.'

'Holy Virgin!' exclaimed Iskander. 'Who can this villain be?'

'The villain, Lord Iskander, is your friend; and your pupil, dear father.'

'Nicæus of Athens!' exclaimed Hunniades.

Iskander was silent and melancholy.

Thereupon the Lady Iduna recounted to her father and Iskander, sitting between them on the margin of the fount, all that had occurred to her, since herself and Nicæus parted with Iskander; nor did she omit to relate to Hunniades all the devotion of Iskander, re-

specting which, like a truly brave man, he had himself been silent. The great Hunniades scarcely knew which rather to do, to lavish his affection on his beloved child, or his gratitude upon Iskander. Thus they went on conversing for some time, Iskander placing his own cloak around Iduna, and almost unconsciously winding his arm around her unresisting form.

Just as they were preparing to return to the Christian camp, a great noise was heard in the grove, and presently, in the direction whence Iduna had arrived, there came a band of men, bearing torches and examining the grove in all directions in great agitation. Iskander and Hunniades stood upon their guard, but soon perceived they were Greeks. Their leader, seeing a group near the fountain, advanced to make inquiries respecting the object of his search, but when he indeed recognised the persons who formed the group, the torch fell from his grasp, and he turned away his head and hid his face in his hands.

Iduna clung to her father; Iskander stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground, but Hunniades, stern and terrible, disembarrassing himself of the grasp of his daughter, advanced and laid his hand upon the stranger.

'Young man,' said the noble father, 'were it contrition instead of shame that inspired this attitude, it might be better. I have often warned you of the fatal consequences of a reckless indulgence of the passions. More than once I have predicted to you, that, however great might be your confidence in your ingenuity and your resources, the hour would arrive when such a career would place you in a position as despicable as it was shameful. That hour has arrived, and that position

is now filled by the Prince of Athens. You stand before the three individuals in this world whom you have most injured, and whom you were most bound to love and to protect. Here is a friend, who has hazarded his prosperity and his existence for your life and your happiness. And you have made him a mere pander to your lusts, and then deserted him in his greatest necessities. This maiden was the companion of your youth, and entitled to your kindest offices. You have treated her infinitely worse than her Turkish captor. And for myself, sir, your father was my dearest friend. I endeavoured to repay his friendship by supplying his place to his orphan child. How I discharged my duty it becomes not me to say: how you have discharged yours, this lady here, my daughter, your late prisoner, sir, can best prove.'

'Oh! spare me, spare me, sir,' said the Prince of Athens, turning and falling upon his knee. 'I am most wretched. Every word cuts to my very core. Just Providence has baffled all my arts, and I am grateful. Whether this lady can, indeed, forgive me, I hardly dare to think, or even hope. And yet forgiveness is a heavenly boon. Perhaps the memory of old days may melt her. As for yourself, sir——but I'll not speak, I cannot. Noble Iskander, if I mistake not, you may whisper words in that fair ear, less grating than my own. May you be happy! I will not profane your prospects with my vows. And yet I'll say farewell!'

The Prince of Athens turned away with an air of complete wretchedness, and slowly withdrew. Iskander followed him.

'Nicæus,' said Iskander; but the Prince entered the grove, and did not turn round.

'Dear Nicæus,' said Iskander. The Prince hesitated.

'Let us not part thus,' said Iskander. 'Iduna is most unhappy. She bade me tell you she had forgotten all.'

'God bless her, and God bless you, too!' replied Nicæus. 'I pray you let me go.'

'Nay! dear Nicæus, are we not friends?'

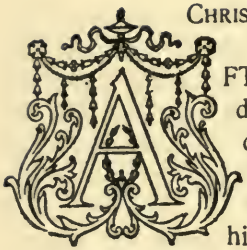
'The best and truest, Iskander. I will to the camp, and meet you in your tent ere morning break. At present, I would be alone.'

'Dear Nicæus, one word. You have said upon one point, what I could well wish unsaid, and dared to prophesy what may never happen. I am not made for such supreme felicity. Epirus is my mistress, my Nicæus. As there is a living God, my friend, most solemnly I vow, I have had no thoughts in this affair, but for your honour.'

'I know it, my dear friend, I know it,' replied Nicæus. 'I keenly feel your admirable worth. Say no more, say no more. She is a fit wife for a hero, and you *are* one!'

CHAPTER XX.

Christian Against Turk.



FTER the battle of the bridge, Iskander had hurried to Croia without delay. In his progress he had made many fruitless inquiries after Iduna and Nicæus, but he consoled himself for the unsatisfactory answers he received by the opinion that they had taken a different course, and the conviction that all must now be safe. The messenger from Croia that informed Hunniades of the escape of his daughter, also solicited his aid in favour of Epirus against the impending invasion of the Turks, and stimulated by personal gratitude as well as by public duty, Hunniades answered the solicitation in person at the head of twenty thousand lances.

Hunniades and Iskander had mutually flattered themselves when apart, that each would be able to quell the anxiety of the other on the subject of Iduna. The leader of Epirus flattered himself that his late companions had proceeded at once to Transylvania, and the Vaivode himself had indulged in the delightful hope that the first person he should embrace at Croia would be his long-lost child. When, therefore,

they met, and were mutually incapable of imparting any information on the subject to each other, they were filled with astonishment and disquietude. Events, however, gave them little opportunity to indulge in anxiety or grief. On the day that Hunniades and his lances arrived at Croia, the invading army of the Turks under the Prince Mahomed crossed the mountains, and soon after pitched their camp on the fertile plain of Kallista.

As Iskander, by the aid of Hunniades and the neighbouring princes, and the patriotic exertions of his countrymen, was at this moment at the head of a force which the Turkish Prince could not have anticipated, he resolved to march at once to meet the Ottomans, and decide the fate of Greece by a pitched battle.

The night before the arrival of Iduna at the famous fountain, the Christian army had taken up its position within a few miles of the Turks. The turbaned warriors wished to delay the engagement until the new moon, the eve of which was at hand. And it happened on that said eve that Iskander, calling to mind his contract with the Turkish Prince made in the gardens of the Seraglio at Adrianople, and believing from the superstitious character of Mahomed that he would not fail to be at the appointed spot, resolved, as we have seen, to repair to the fountain of Kallista.

And now from that fountain the hero retired, bearing with him a prize scarcely less precious than the freedom of his country, for which he was to combat on the morrow's morn.

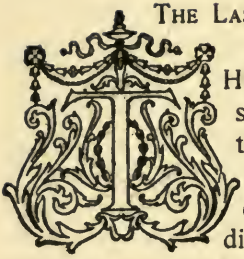
Ere the dawn had broken, the Christian power was in motion. Iskander commanded the centre,

Hunniades the right wing. The left was entrusted at his urgent request to the Prince of Athens. A mist that hung about the plain allowed Nicæus to charge the right wing of the Turks almost unperceived. He charged with irresistible fury, and soon disordered the ranks of the Moslemin. Mahomed with the reserve hastened to their aid. A mighty multitude of Janissaries, shouting the name of Allah and his Prophet, penetrated the Christian centre. Hunniades endeavoured to attack them on their flank, but was himself charged by the Turkish cavalry. The battle was now general, and raged with terrible fury. Iskander had secreted in his centre, a new and powerful battery of cannon, presented to him by the Pope, and which had just arrived from Venice. This battery played upon the Janissaries with destruction. He himself mowed them down with his irresistible scimitar. Infinite was the slaughter! awful the uproar! But of all the Christian knights, this day, no one performed such mighty feats of arms as the Prince of Athens. With a reckless desperation he dashed about the field, and everything seemed to yield to his inspired impulse. His example animated his men with such a degree of enthusiasm, that the division to which he was opposed, although encouraged by the presence of Mahomed himself, could no longer withstand the desperate courage of the Christians, and fled in all directions. Then, rushing to the aid of Iskander, Nicæus, at the head of a body of picked men, dashed upon the rear of the Janissaries, and nearly surrounded them. Hunniades instantly made a fresh charge upon the left wing of the Turks. A panic fell upon the Moslemin, who were little prepared for such a demonstration of strength on the part of their adversaries. In a few

minutes, their order seemed generally broken, and their leaders in vain endeavoured to rally them. Waving his bloody scimitar, and bounding on his black charger, Iskander called upon his men to secure the triumph of the Cross and the freedom of Epirus. Pursuit was now general.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Last Words of Nicæus.



HE Turks were massacred by thousands. Mahomed, when he found that all was lost, fled to the mountains, with a train of guards and eunuchs, and left the care of his dispersed host to his Pachas. The hills were covered with the fugitives and their pursuers. Some fled also to the sea-shore, where the Turkish fleet was at anchor. The plain was strewn with corpses and arms, and tents and standards. The sun was now high in the heavens. The mist had cleared away; but occasional clouds of smoke still sailed about.

A solitary Christian knight entered a winding pass in the green hills, apart from the scene of strife. The slow and trembling step of his wearied steed would have ill qualified him to join in the triumphant pursuit, even had he himself been physically enabled; but the Christian knight was covered with gore, unhappily not alone that of his enemies. He was, indeed, streaming with desperate wounds, and scarcely could his fainting form retain its tottering seat.

The winding pass, which for some singular reason he now pursued in solitude, instead of returning to

the busy camp for aid and assistance, conducted the knight to a small green valley, covered with sweet herbs, and entirely surrounded by hanging woods. In the centre rose the ruins of a Doric fane; three or four columns, grey and majestic. All was still and silent, save that in the clear blue sky an eagle flew, high in the air, but whirling round the temple.

The knight reached the ruins of the Doric fane, and with difficulty dismounting from his charger, fell upon the soft and flowery turf, and for some moments was motionless. His horse stole a few yards away, and though scarcely less injured than its rider, instantly commenced cropping the inviting pasture.

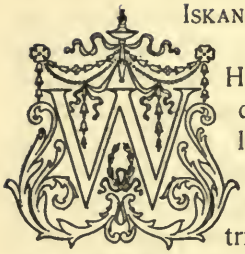
At length the Christian knight slowly raised his head, and leaning on his arm, sighed deeply. His face was very pale; but as he looked up, and perceived the eagle in the heaven, a smile played upon his pallid cheek, and his beautiful eye gleamed with a sudden flash of light.

'Glorious bird!' murmured the Christian warrior, 'once I deemed that my career might resemble thine! 'Tis over now; and Greece, for which I would have done so much, will soon forget my immemorial name. I have stolen here to die in silence and in beauty. This blue air, and these green woods, and these lone columns, which oft to me have been a consolation, breathing of the poetic past, and of the days wherein I fain had lived, I have escaped from the fell field of carnage to die among them. Farewell my country! Farewell to one more beautiful than Greece, farewell, Iduna!'

These were the last words of Nicæus, Prince of Athens.

CHAPTER XXII.

Iskander, King of Epirus!



HILE the unhappy lover of the daughter of Hunniades breathed his last words to the solitary elements, his more fortunate friend received, in the centre of his scene of triumph, the glorious congratulations of his emancipated country. The discomfiture of the Turks was complete, and this overthrow, coupled with their recent defeat in Bulgaria, secured Christendom from their assaults during the remainder of the reign of Amurath the Second. Surrounded by his princely allies, and the chieftains of Epirus, the victorious standards of Christendom, and the triumphant trophies of the Moslemin, Iskander received from the great Hunniades the hand of his beautiful daughter. 'Thanks to these brave warriors,' said the hero, 'I can now offer to your daughter a safe, an honourable, and a Christian home.'

'It is to thee, great sir, that Epirus owes its security,' said an ancient chieftain, addressing Iskander, 'its national existence, and its holy religion. All that we have to do now is to preserve them; nor, indeed, do I see that we can more effectually obtain these

great objects than by entreating thee to mount the redeemed throne of thy ancestors. Therefore I say GOD SAVE ISKANDER, KING OF EPIRUS!'

And all the people shouted and said, 'GOD SAVE THE KING! GOD SAVE ISKANDER, KING OF EPIRUS!'

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK

A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

'He left us the legacy of heroes: the memory of his great name and the inspiration of his great example.'

TO

LORD HENRY BENTINCK,

IS INSCRIBED

This Political Biography

OF

ONE FOR WHOM HE ENTERTAINED A DEEP AFFECTION,

AND WHOSE TALENTS AND VIRTUES

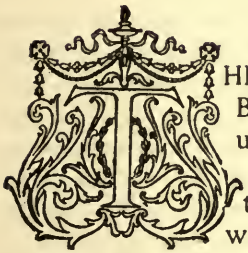
HE SHARES.

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK

A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I.

The Man.



HE political career of Lord George Bentinck was peculiar. He had, to use his own expression, 'sate in eight Parliaments without having taken part in any great debate,' when remarkable events suddenly impelled him to advance and occupy not only a considerable but a leading position in our public affairs. During three years, under circumstances of great difficulty, he displayed some of the highest qualities of political life: courage and a lofty spirit; a mastery of details which experience usually alone confers; a quick apprehension and a clear intelligence; indomitable firmness; promptness, punctuality, and perseverance which never failed; an energy seldom surpassed; and a capacity for labour which was perhaps never equalled. At the very moment when he had overcome many contrarieties and prejudices; when he had been most successful in the House of Commons, and,

sustained only by his own resources, had considerably modified the legislation of the government which he opposed on a measure of paramount importance; when the nation, which had long watched him with interest, began to congratulate itself on the devotion of such a man to the business of the country, he was in an instant taken from us. Then it was that, the memory of the past and the hope of the future blending together, all men seemed to mourn over this untimely end, and there was that pang in the public heart which accompanies the unexpected disappearance of a strong character.

What manner of man this was, who thus on a sudden in the middle term of life relinquished all the ease and pleasure of a patrician existence to work often eighteen hours daily, not for a vain and brilliant notoriety, which was foreign alike both to his tastes and his turn of mind, but for the advancement of principles, the advocacy of which in the chief scene of his efforts was sure to obtain for him only contention and unkindly feelings; what were his motives, purposes and opinions; how and why did he labour; what were the whole scope and tendency of this original, vigorous, and self-schooled intelligence; these would appear to be subjects not unworthy of contemplation, and especially not uninteresting to a free and political community.

The difficulty of treating cotemporary characters and events has been ever acknowledged; but it may be doubted whether the difficulty is diminished when we would commemorate the men and things that have preceded us. The cloud of passion in the first instance, or in the other the mist of time, may render it equally hard and perplexing to discriminate.

It should not be forgotten that the most authentic and interesting histories are those which have been composed by actors in the transactions which they record. The cotemporary writer who is personally familiar with his theme has unquestionably a great advantage; but it is assumed that his pen can scarcely escape the bias of private friendship or political connection. Yet truth, after all, is the sovereign passion of mankind; nor is the writer of these pages prepared to relinquish his conviction that it is possible to combine the accuracy of the present with the impartiality of the future.

Lord George Bentinck had sat for eighteen years in Parliament, and, before he entered it, had been for three years private secretary to Mr. Canning, who had married the sister of the Duchess of Portland. Such a post would seem a happy commencement of a public career; but whether it were the untimely death of his distinguished relative, or a natural indisposition, Lord George — though he retained the seat for King's Lynn, in which he had succeeded his uncle, the late governor-general of India — directed his energies to other than parliamentary pursuits. For some time he had followed his profession, which was that of arms, but of late years he had become absorbed in the pastime and fortunes of the turf, in which his whole being seemed engrossed, and which he pursued on a scale that perhaps has never been equalled.

Lord George had withdrawn his support from the government of the Duke of Wellington, when the friends of Mr. Canning quitted that administration; and when in time they formed not the least considerable portion of the cabinet of Lord Grey, he re-

sumed his seat on the ministerial benches. On that occasion an administrative post was offered him and declined; and on subsequent occasions similar requests to him to take office were equally in vain. Lord George, therefore, was an original and hearty supporter of the Reform Bill, and he continued to uphold the Whigs in all their policy until the secession of Lord Stanley, between whom and himself there subsisted warm personal as well as political sympathies. Although he was not only a friend to religious liberty, as we shall have occasion afterwards to remark, but always viewed with great sympathy the condition of the Roman Catholic portion of the Irish population, he shrank from the taint of the ultra-montane intrigue. Accompanying Lord Stanley, he became in due time a member of the great Conservative opposition, and, as he never did anything by halves, became one of the most earnest, as he certainly was one of the most enlightened, supporters of Sir Robert Peel. His trust in that minister was indeed absolute, and he has subsequently stated in conversation that when, towards the end of the session of '45, a member of the Tory party ventured to predict and denounce the impending defection of the minister, there was no member of the Conservative party who more violently condemned the unfounded attack, or more readily impugned the motives of the assailant.

He was not a very frequent attendant in the House. He might be counted on for a party division, and when, towards the termination of the Melbourne ministry, the forces were very nearly balanced, and the struggle became very close, he might have been observed, on more than one occasion, entering the House at a late hour, clad in a white great-coat,

AFTER A DRAWING BY CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS, FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

Lord George Bentinck.

(See page 9, *Biography of Lord George Bentinck.*)

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which softened, but did not conceal, the scarlet hunting-coat.

Although he took no part in debate, and attended the House rather as a club than as a senate, he possessed a great and peculiar influence in it. He was viewed with interest, and often with extraordinary regard, by every sporting man in the House. With almost all of these he was acquainted; some of them, on either side, were his intimate companions and confederates.

His eager and energetic disposition; his quick perception, clear judgment, and prompt decision; the tenacity with which he clung to his opinions; his frankness and love of truth; his daring and speculative spirit; his lofty bearing, blended as it was with a simplicity of manner very remarkable; the ardour of his friendships, even the fierceness of his hates and prejudices—all combined to form one of those strong characters who, whatever may be their pursuit, must always direct and lead.

Nature had clothed this vehement spirit with a material form which was in perfect harmony with its noble and commanding character. He was tall and remarkable for his presence; his countenance almost a model of manly beauty; the face oval, the complexion clear and mantling; the forehead lofty and white; the nose aquiline and delicately moulded; the upper lip short. But it was in the dark-brown eye, which flashed with piercing scrutiny, that all the character of the man came forth: a brilliant glance, not soft, but ardent, acute, imperious, incapable of deception or of being deceived.

Although he had not much sustained his literary culture, and of late years, at any rate, had not given

his mind to political study, he had in the course of his life seen and heard a great deal, and with profit. Nothing escaped his observation; he forgot nothing and always thought. So it was that on all the great political questions of the day he had arrived at conclusions which guided him. He always took large views and had no prejudices about things, whatever he might indulge in as to persons. He was always singularly anxious to acquire the truth, and would spare no pains for that purpose; but when once his mind was made up, it was impossible to influence him.

In politics, he was a Whig of 1688, which became him, modified, however, by all the experience of the present age. He wished to see our society founded on a broad basis of civil and religious liberty. He retained much of the old jealousy of the court, but had none of popular franchises. He was for the Established Church, but for nothing more, and was very repugnant to priestly domination. As for the industrial question, he was sincerely opposed to the Manchester scheme, because he thought that its full development would impair and might subvert our territorial constitution, which he held to be the real security of our freedom, and because he believed that it would greatly injure Ireland, and certainly dissolve our colonial empire.

He had a great respect for merchants, though he looked with some degree of jealousy on the development of our merely foreign trade. His knowledge of character qualified him in a great degree to govern men. and if some drawbacks from this influence might be experienced in his too rigid tenacity of opinion, and in some quickness of temper, which,

however, always sprang from a too sensitive heart, great compensation might be found in the fact that there probably never was a human being so entirely devoid of conceit and so completely exempt from selfishness. Nothing delighted him more than to assist and advance others. All the fruits of his laborious investigations were always at the service of his friends without reserve or self-consideration. He encouraged them by making occasions for their exertions, and would relinquish his own opportunity without a moment's hesitation, if he thought the abandonment might aid a better man.

CHAPTER II.

The Protection Problem.

HERE was at this time a metropolitan society for the protection of agriculture, of which the Duke of Richmond was chairman, and which had been established to counteract the proceedings of the Manchester confederation. It was in communication with the local Protection societies throughout the country; and although the adhesion to its service by the parliamentary members of the old Conservative party had been more limited than might have been expected, nevertheless many county members were enrolled in its ranks, and a few of the most eminent were actively engaged in its management. In this they were assisted by an equal number of the most considerable tenant-farmers. In the present state of affairs, the council of the Protection Society afforded the earliest and readiest means to collect opinion and methodize action; and it was therefore resolved among its managers to invite all members of Parliament who sympathized with their purpose, though they might not be members of their society, to attend their meeting and aid them at the present crisis with their counsel.

A compliance with this request occasioned the first public appearance of Lord George Bentinck, as one of the organizers of a political party,—for he aspired to no more. The question was, whether a third political party could be created and sustained,—a result at all times and under any circumstances difficult to achieve, and which had failed even under the auspices of accomplished and experienced statesmen. In the present emergency, was there that degree of outraged public feeling in the country, which would overcome all obstacles and submit to any inconveniences, in order to ensure its representation in the House of Commons? It was the opinion of Lord George Bentinck that such was the case; that if for the moment that feeling was inert and latent, it was an apathy which arose from the sudden shock of public confidence, and the despair which under such circumstances takes possession of men; that if it could be shown to the country, that the great bulk of the Conservative party were true to their faith, and were not afraid, even against the fearful odds which they would have to encounter, to proclaim it, the confidence and the courage of the country would rally, and the party in the House of Commons would find external sympathy and support.

With these views it became of paramount importance that the discussion on the government measure should be sustained on the part of the Protectionists with their utmost powers. They must prove to the country, that they could represent their cause in debate, and to this end all their energies must be directed. It would be fatal to them if the discussion were confined to one or two nights, and they overborne by the leading and habitual speakers. They must bring forward new men; they must encourage

the efforts of those now unrecognized and comparatively unknown; they must overcome all reserve and false shame, and act as became men called upon to a critical and leading part, not by their arrogance or ambition, but by the desertion and treachery of those to whose abilities they had bowed without impatience and reluctance. There was a probability of several vacancies immediately taking place in counties where the seats were filled by converts, but men of too scrupulous an honour to retain the charge which they had sought and accepted as the professors of opinions contrary to those which now received their mournful adhesion. The result of these elections would greatly depend upon the spirit and figure of the party in the House of Commons, in their first encounter with the enemy.

These views, so just and so spirited, advanced with high-bred earnestness by one rarely met in political turmoils, and enforced with a freshness and an affable simplicity which were very winning, wonderfully encouraged those to whom they were addressed. All seemed touched by the flame which burned in the breast of that man, so lofty in his thoughts but so humble in his ambition, who counselled ever the highest deeds, and was himself ever prepared to undertake the humblest duties.

The business of this day was notable. Calculations were made of those who might be fairly counted on to take a part in debate; some discussion even ensued as to who should venture to reply late at night to the minister; a committee was appointed to communicate with all members on either side supposed to be favourable to the principle of Protection to the labour of the country; a parliamentary staff was or-

ganized, not only to secure the attendance of members, but to guard over the elections; finally, the form of the amendment to the government measure was discussed and settled, and it was agreed that, if possible, it should be moved by Mr. Philip Miles, the member for the city of Bristol, and who had the ear of the House not merely from the importance of his constituency, and seconded by Sir William Heathcote, the member for the county of Hampshire, a country gentleman of great accomplishments, and so highly considered by both sides that he was very generally spoken of as a probable successor to the chair.

All was furnished by this lately forlorn party except a leader, and even then many eyes were turned and some hopeful murmurs addressed towards Lord George Bentinck, who in the course of this morning had given such various proofs of his fitness and such evidence of his resource. But he shook his head with a sort of suppressed smile, a faint blush, and an air of proud humility that was natural to him: 'I think,' he said, 'we have had enough of leaders; it is not in my way; I shall remain the last of the rank and file.'

So little desirous, originally, was Lord George Bentinck to interfere actively in that great controversy in which ultimately he took so leading a part, that before the meeting of Parliament in 1846 he begged a gentleman whom he greatly esteemed, a member of the legal profession, and since raised to its highest honours, to call upon him at Harcourt House, when he said that he had taken great pains to master the case of the protective system; that he was convinced its abrogation would ultimately be very injurious to this country; but although, both in point of argument

and materials, he feared no opponent, he felt constitutionally so incapable of ever making a speech, that he wished to induce some eminent lawyer to enter the House of Commons, and avail himself of his views and materials, which he had, with that object, reduced to writing. He begged, therefore, that his friend, although a free-trader, would assist him, by suggesting a fitting person for this office.

Accordingly, the name of a distinguished member of the bar, who had already published a work of merit, impugning the principles of the new commercial system, was mentioned, and this learned gentleman was applied to, and was not indisposed to accept the task. A mere accident prevented this arrangement being accomplished. Lord George then requested his friend to make some other selection; but his adviser very sensibly replied, that although the House of Commons would have listened with respect to a gentleman who had given evidence of the sincerity of his convictions by the publication of a work which had no reference to Parliament, they would not endure the instance of a lawyer brought into the House merely to speak from his brief; and that the attempt would be utterly fruitless. He earnestly counselled Lord George himself to make the effort; but Lord George, with characteristic tenacity, clung for some time to his project, though his efforts to accomplish it were fortunately not successful.

Some of the friends of Lord George Bentinck, remembering his inexperience in debate, aware of the great length at which he must necessarily treat the theme, and mindful that he was not physically well-qualified for controlling popular assemblies, not having a strong voice, or, naturally, a very fluent manner,

were anxious that he should not postpone his speech until an hour so late; that an audience, jaded by twelve nights' discussion, would be ill-attuned to statistical arguments and economical details. But still clinging to the hope that some accident might yet again postpone the division, so that the Protectionists might gain the vote of Mr. Hildyard, who had been returned that day for South Notts, having defeated a cabinet minister, Lord George remained motionless until long past midnight. Mr. Cobden having spoken on the part of the confederation, the closing of the debate was felt to be inevitable. Even then, by inducing a Protectionist to solicit the Speaker's eye, Lord George attempted to avert the division; but no supporter of the government measure, of any colour, advancing to reply to this volunteer, Bentinck was obliged to rise. He came out like a lion forced from his lair. And so it happened, that after all his labours of body and mind, after all his research and unwearied application and singular vigilance, after having been at his post for a month, never leaving the House, even for refreshment, he had to undertake the most difficult enterprise in which a man can well embark, with a concurrence of every disadvantage which could ensure failure and defeat. It would seem that the audience, the subject, and the orator, must be equally exhausted; for the assembly had listened for twelve nights to the controversy, and he who was about to address them had, according to his strange habit, taken no sustenance the whole day; it being his custom to dine after the House was up, which was very often long after midnight, and this, with the exception of a slender breakfast, rigidly restricted to dry toast, was his only meal in the four-and-twenty houre.

He had been forced to this regimen, from food exercising a lethargic influence over him; so that, in addition to some constitutional weakness in his organ, he usually laboured, when he addressed the House, under the disadvantage of general exhaustion. And this was, no doubt, a principal cause of that over-excitement and apparently unnecessary energy in his manner of speaking, of which he was himself perfectly, and even painfully, conscious. He was wont to say, that before he could speak he had to make a voice, and, as it were, to pump it from the very core of his frame. One who took a great interest in his success once impressed on him the expediency of trusting entirely to his natural voice and the interest and gravity of his matter, which, combined with his position as the recognized leader of a great party, would be adequate to command the attention of his audience; and he subsequently endeavoured very often to comply with this suggestion. He endeavoured also very much to control his redundancy of action and gesture, when that peculiarity was pointed out to him with the delicacy, but the sincerity, of friendship. He entirely freed himself from a very awkward feature of his first style of speaking, namely, the frequent repetition of a sentence, which seemed at first a habit inveterate with him; but such was his force of will, that when the necessity of ridding himself of this drawback was properly pointed out to him, he achieved the desired result. No one bore criticism more gently and kindly, so long as it was confined to his personal and intellectual characteristics, for he was a man absolutely without vanity or conceit, who thought very humbly of himself, in respect of abilities, and deemed no labour too great to achieve even a

slight improvement. But though in these respects the very child of simplicity, he was a man of almost unexampled pride, and chafed under criticism, when his convictions or his conduct were questioned. He was very tenacious of his opinion, almost inexorable; and it required a courage nearly equal to his own, combined with a serene temper, successfully to impugn his conclusions.

Not, therefore, excited by vanity, but sustained by self-respect, by an overpowering feeling that he owed it to himself and the opinions he held, to show to the world that they had not been lightly adopted and should not be lightly laid aside, Bentinck rose, long past the noon of night, at the end of this memorable debate, to undertake an office from which the most successful and most experienced rhetoricians of Parliament would have shrunk with intuitive discretion. But duty scorns prudence, and criticism has few terrors for a man with a great purpose. Unshaken by the adverse hour and circumstances, he proceeded to accomplish the object which he had long meditated, and for which he was fully prepared.

Reminding the House, while he appealed to their indulgence, that, though he had had the honour of a seat for eight parliaments, he had never once ventured to trespass on its time on any subject of great debate, he at once took a clear and comprehensive ground of objection to the government scheme. He opposed it not only because he objected to the great change contemplated with respect to the agricultural interest, but, on principle, to the entire measure, 'a great commercial revolution, which we are of opinion that the circumstances of the country do not by any means require.'

Noticing the observation of the Secretary at War, that the agricultural interest, in submitting to this great change, might now accept it with honour, instead of its being eventually extorted by force, he happily retorted, that vicious as he thought the measure, he should feel it deprived of half its vice if it could be carried without loss of honour, damage to reputation, and forfeiture of public character to a vast number of gentlemen now present. And he proceeded to show among other testimonies, by an appeal to the distinct language of the speech from the throne on the dissolution of 1841, that 'every member who occupied a seat in this House was returned pledged either to oppose or maintain the principle of protection to national industry.'

Adverting to the new position, that the experience of the last three years justified the reversal of the system which the existing administration had been summoned to office to uphold, he wisely remarked, that 'the country will not be satisfied with three years' experience of any system. Three years' experience is not sufficiently extensive to afford a proper criterion by which we may decide the failure or success of any description of policy whatsoever.'

Noticing that the minister had more especially founded 'his present belief in doctrines contrary to those which he had heretofore uniformly maintained,' by the assumption that the price of corn would not be more reduced than the price of cattle and other commodities affected by the tariff of 1842, and also by the results of previous experiments in the instances of silk and wool, Lord George 'accepted his challenge' on these grounds, and proceeded in great detail to investigate these examples.

The House listened with great attention for full two hours, during which he treated these subjects. This attention no doubt was generally accorded because it was felt due to the occasion, and, under the circumstances, to the speaker; but those who, however contrary might be the results at which they had arrived, had themselves deeply entered into these investigations, recognized very soon that Bentinck was master of his subject. Sir Robert Peel looked round very often with that expression of appreciation which it was impossible for his nature to refuse to parliamentary success, even when the ability displayed was hostile to his projects. The minister, with reference to the wool trade, had dwelt on the year 1842, when prices were much depressed, while they had greatly rallied in 1844, when the importation of foreign wool had risen from forty-five to sixty-five millions of pounds; and he had drawn a triumphant inference that the increase of importation and the increase of price were in consequence of the reduction of the duty. This instance had produced a great effect; but Lord George showed the House, by a reference to the tables of 1836, that the importation of foreign wool had then risen to sixty-five millions of pounds, and that large foreign importation was consistent with high prices to the domestic grower. Nor was he less successful about the foreign cattle. He reminded his friends on the Treasury bench how strenuously, previously to the introduction of the tariff of 1842, they had urged upon their agricultural friends that no foreign cattle could enter under their regulations, and that the whole object of the change was to strengthen the hands of the agricultural interest, as regarded more essential protection, by removing the

odium of a nominal protection: 'Convinced by my right honourable friends, in 1842, that their tariff would be as inoperative as it has proved, I gave my cordial support to the measure.'

Perceiving that the House began to be wearied with the details of the silk trade, which he had investigated with extraordinary zeal, he postponed until the specific vote in committee his objections to the reduction of the timber duties. The fact is, he had so thoroughly mastered all these topics, that his observations on each of them would have themselves formed a speech of sufficient length and interest. But he successfully checked any interruption by what may be fairly styled his dignified diffidence.

'I trust the House will recollect that I am fighting the battle of a party whose leaders have deserted them; and though I cannot wield my weapons with the skill of the right honourable gentleman on the Treasury bench, I trust the House will remember the emergency which has dragged me out to intrude upon their indulgence.'

And again, when he announced that he was now about to investigate the pretext of 'famine in the land,' and some impatience was exhibited, he drew up and said, 'I think, having sat eighteen years in this house, and never once having trespassed on its time before in any one single great debate, I may appeal to the past as a proof that I duly weigh the measure of my abilities, and that I am painfully conscious of my proper place in this house.'

It was impossible to resist such appeals from such a person, even at three o'clock in the morning; and diffident, but determined, he then entered into what was, perhaps, the most remarkable portion of his

speech — an investigation of what was the real position of the country with respect to the supply of food in the past autumn and at the present moment. Having shown from the trade circulars that, far from there being at present 'a wheat famine,' the stocks in the granaries in bond were more than double in amount to what they were in the year 1845, 'a year admitted by all to be a year of extraordinary abundance,' he proceeded to the Irish part of the question: 'I beg leave to say, that though this debate has now continued for three weeks, I am the first gentleman who has at all entered into the real state of the case as regards the allegation of a potato famine in Ireland, upon which, be it remembered, is founded the sole case of her Majesty's ministers for a repeal of the corn laws.'

And this was very true. The fact is, though the Protectionist party had made a most unexpected and gallant defence, no one was really prepared for the contest except Bentinck. Between the end of November and the meeting of Parliament, he had thrown all the energies of his passionate mind into this question. He had sought information on all points and always at the fountain-head. He had placed himself in immediate communication with the ablest representatives of every considerable interest attacked, and being ardent and indefatigable, gifted with a tenacious memory and a very clear and searching spirit, there was scarcely a detail or an argument connected with his subject which was not immediately at his command. No speeches in favour of the protective system have ever been made in the House of Commons compared with his in depth and range of knowledge; and had there been any member not connected with

the government, who had been able to vindicate the merits of British agriculture as he did when the final struggle occurred, the impression which was made by the too-often unanswered speeches of the Manchester confederation would never have been effected. But the great Conservative party, exhausted by the labours of ten years of opposition, thought that after the triumph of '41 it might claim a furlough. The defence of their cause was left entirely to the ministers of their choice; and ministers, distracted with detail and wearied with official labour, are not always the most willing or the most efficient champions of the organic principles of a party.

Sir Robert Peel, with respect to the disease in the Irish potato, had largely referred to the statements of the inspectors of police. Lord George wanted to know why the reports of the lieutenants of the Irish counties were not given. Being well-informed upon this head, he asked the government to produce the report of Lord Duncannon, the lord lieutenant of Carlow; especially that of his noble father, the earl of Besborough, lord lieutenant of Kilkenny. 'Is there any man in England or in Ireland whose opinion, from his business-like habits, his great practical knowledge, and the warm and affectionate interest which for a long period of years he has taken in everything which concerns the interests of Ireland, especially of the Irish peasantry—is there any man whose opinion would have greater weight? The opinion of Lord Besborough on an Irish subject, the lieutenant of an Irish county, and himself long a cabinet minister? Well, sir, I am assured that, having taken the utmost pains to investigate this matter, Lord Besborough has made an elaborate report to the Irish government. Well,

then, I desire to know why Lord Besborough's report to the Irish government is suppressed? Is it because that report would not assist the present policy of her Majesty's government?'

He alleged the names of many other individuals of high station who had officially reported on the subject to the government: of Lord Castlereagh, the lieutenant of Down, a member of the House; of Lord de Vesci, whose son was sitting for the Queen's County, over which his father presided in the name of the queen. A murmur ran round the House, that it would have been as well if these reports had been produced.

The last portion of this argumentative harangue referred to the most important division of the subject. Bentinck met it boldly, without evasion; nor was there any portion of his address more interesting, more satisfactory, and more successful. 'I now come,' he said, 'to the great challenge, which is ever and anon put forth by the Anti-Corn Law League, and now by their disciples, her Majesty's ministers. How are we, they ask, with our limited extent of territory, to feed a population annually and rapidly increasing at the rate of three hundred thousand a-year, as generally stated by the member for Stockport—a rate increased by my noble friend, the member for the West Riding, to a thousand a day, or three hundred and sixty-five thousand a year?'

He first proved in a complete manner that, from the year 1821 to the year 1844, the population of the country had increased at the rate of less than thirty-two per cent., while the growth of wheat during the same period had increased no less than sixty-four per cent. He then proceeded to inquire why, with such an increased produce, we were still, as regards bread

corn, to a certain extent, an importing nation? This he accounted for by the universally improved condition of the people, and the enlarged command of food by the working classes. He drew an animated picture, founded entirely on the representations of writers and public men adverse to the Protective System, of the superior condition of the people of 'England, happy England,' to that of other countries: how they consumed much more of the best food, and lived much longer. This was under Protection, which Lord John Russell had stigmatized, in his letter, 'the bane of agriculture.' 'In the history of my noble friend's illustrious family,' he continued, 'I should have thought that he would have found a remarkable refutation of such a notion.' And then he drew a lively sketch of the colossal and patriotic works of the Earls and Dukes of Bedford, 'whereby they had drained and reclaimed three hundred thousand acres of land drowned in water, and brought them into cultivation, and thus converted into fertile fields a vast morass extending over seven counties in England.' Could the system which had inspired such enterprise be justly denounced as baneful?

To show the means of the country to sustain even a much-increasing population, and that those means were in operation, he entered into one of the most original and interesting calculations that was perhaps ever offered to the House of Commons. Reminding the House that in the preceding year (1845) the farmers of England, at a cost of two millions sterling, had imported two hundred and eighty thousand tons of guano, he proceeded to estimate what would be the effect on the productive powers of the land of that novel application. Two hundred thousand tons, or,

in other words, four million hundred-weight, were expended on the land in 1845. Half of these, he assumed, would be applied to the growth of wheat, and the other half to the growth of turnips preparatory to the wheat crop of the ensuing year. According to the experiments tried and recorded in the Royal Agricultural Journal, it would seem that by the application of two hundred-weight of guano to an acre of wheat land, the produce would be increased by one quarter per acre. At this rate, one hundred thousand tons, or two million hundred-weight of guano would add one million quarters of wheat to the crop, or bread for one year for one million of people. But as he was very careful never to over-state a case, Lord George assumed, that it would require three hundred hundred-weight of guano to an acre to produce an extra quarter of wheat. According to this estimate, one hundred thousand tons of guano, applied to the land in 1845, must have added six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six quarters of grain to the wheat crop, or, in other words, bread for six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six additional mouths. 'And now for turnips,' he continued. The Norfolk authorities whom he quoted have in like manner proved that two hundred-weight of guano will add ten tons per acre to the turnip crop. But again, for fear of exaggeration, he supposed that three hundred-weight would be requisite to create such increased fertility. In this case, two million hundred-weight of guano would add six million six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty tons to the natural unmanured produce of the crop. Now it is generally considered that one ton of Swedes would last twenty sheep three weeks, and that each

sheep should gain half a pound of meat per week, or one pound and a half in three weeks; thus twenty sheep feeding on one ton of turnips in three weeks should in the aggregate make, as the graziers say, thirty pounds of mutton. But to be safe in his estimate, he would assume that one ton of turnips makes only half this quantity. 'Multiply, then,' exclaimed Bentinck with the earnest air of a crusader, 'six million six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty by fifteen, and you have no less than ninety-nine million nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand and nine hundred pounds of mutton as the fruits of one hundred thousand tons of guano; which, at ninety-two pounds per man — the average Englishman's allowance — affords meat for one million eight hundred and sixty thousand nine hundred and fifty-five — nearly two million of her Majesty's subjects.'

This is a specimen of those original and startling calculations to which the House was soon to become accustomed from his lips. They were received at first with astonishment and incredulity; but they were never impugned. The fact is, he was extremely cautious in his data, and no man was more accustomed ever to impress upon his friends the extreme expediency of not over-stating a case. It should also be remarked of Lord George Bentinck, that in his most complicated calculations he never sought aid from notes.

We have necessarily only noticed a few of the traits of this remarkable performance. Its termination was impressive.

'We have heard in the course of these discussions a good deal about an ancient monarchy, a reformed House of Commons, and a proud aristocracy. Sir,

with regard to our ancient monarchy, I have no observation to make; but, if so humble an individual as myself might be permitted to whisper a word in the ear of that illustrious and royal personage who, as he stands nearest, so is he justly dearest, to her who sits upon the throne, I would take leave to say, that I cannot but think he listened to ill advice, when, on the first night of this great discussion, he allowed himself to be seduced by the first minister of the crown to come down to this House to usher in, to give *éclat*, and as it were by reflection from the queen, to give the semblance of the personal sanction of her Majesty to a measure which, be it for good or for evil, a great majority at least of the landed aristocracy of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland, imagine fraught with deep injury, if not ruin, to them —a measure which, not confined in its operation to this great class, is calculated to grind down countless smaller interests engaged in the domestic trades and interests of the empire, transferring the profits of all these interests—English, Scotch, Irish, and Colonial —great and small alike, from Englishmen, from Scotchmen, and from Irishmen, to Americans, to Frenchmen, to Russians, to Poles, to Prussians, and to Germans. Sir, I come now to the reformed House of Commons; and as one who was a party to that great measure, I cannot but feel a deep interest in its success, and more especially in that portion of it which extended the franchise to the largest and the most respectable body in the kingdom—I mean the landed tenantry of England; and deeply should I regret should any large proportion of those members who have been sent to Parliament to represent them in this House, prove to be the men to bring lasting

dishonour upon themselves, their constituencies, and this House, by an act of tergiversation so gross as to be altogether unprecedented in the annals of any reformed or unreformed House of Commons. Sir, lastly, I come to the "proud aristocracy." We are a proud aristocracy, but if we are proud, it is that we are proud in the chastity of our honour. If we assisted in '41 in turning the Whigs out of office, because we did not consider a fixed duty of eight shillings a quarter on foreign corn a sufficient protection, it was with honesty of purpose and in single-mindedness we did so; and as we were not before the fact, we will not be accomplices after the fact in the fraud by which the Whig ministers were expelled from power. If we are a proud aristocracy, we are proud of our honour, inasmuch as we never have been guilty, and never can be guilty, of double-dealing with the farmers of England — of swindling our opponents, deceiving our friends, or betraying our constituents.'

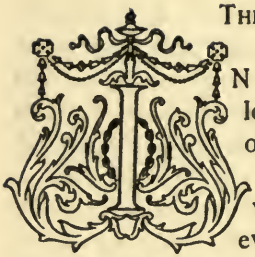
The division was called. The West-India interest, notwithstanding the amendment was moved by the member for Bristol, deserted the Protectionists. Deaf to the appeals, and the remonstrances, and the warnings of Lord George, one of their leading members replied, with a smile of triumphant content, that 'they had made a satisfactory arrangement for themselves.' How satisfactory did the West-Indians find it four months subsequently? All the shipping interest deserted the land. They were for everything free, except navigation; there was no danger of that being interfered with; 'it rested on quite distinct grounds — national grounds.' They were warned, but they smiled in derisive self-complacency. Lord George Bentinck lived to have the West-India interest and

the shipping interest on their knees to him, to defend their perilled or to restore their ruined fortunes; and with characteristic generosity and proud consistency, he undertook the task, and sacrificed his life in the attempt.

Notwithstanding these terrible defalcations, when the numbers were announced, at nearly four o'clock in the morning, the majority had not reached those three magical figures supposed necessary, under the circumstances, to success. In a house of five hundred and eighty-one members present, the amendment of the Protectionists was defeated only by ninety-seven; and two hundred and forty-two gentlemen, in spite of desertion, difficulty, and defeat, still maintained the 'chastity of their honour.'

CHAPTER III.

The Irish Question.



N THE meantime, besides the prolonged and unforeseen resistance of the Protectionists, there were other and unexpected causes at work which equally, or perhaps even more powerfully tended to the fulfilment of the scheme of delay, which Lord George Bentinck had recommended his friends to adopt and encourage.

In the latter months of the year 1845, there broke out in some of the counties of Ireland one of those series of outrages which have hitherto periodically occurred in districts of that country. Assassination and crimes of violence were rife: men on the queen's highway were shot from behind hedges, or suddenly torn from their horses and beaten to death with clubs; houses were visited in the night by bodies of men, masked and armed—their owners dragged from their beds, and, in the presence of their wives and children, maimed and mutilated; the administration of unlawful oaths, with circumstances of terror, indicated the existence of secret confederations, whose fell intents, profusely and ostentatiously announced by

threatening letters, were frequently and savagely perpetrated.

These barbarous distempers had their origin in the tenure of land in Ireland, and in the modes of its occupation. A combination of causes, political, social, and economical, had for more than a century unduly stimulated the population of a country which had no considerable resources except in the soil. That soil had become divided into minute allotments, held by a pauper tenantry, at exorbitant rents, of a class of middlemen, themselves necessitous, and who were mere traders in land. A fierce competition raged amid the squalid multitude for these strips of earth which were their sole means of existence. To regulate this fatal rivalry, and restrain this emulation of despair, the peasantry, enrolled in secret societies, found refuge in an inexorable code. He who supplanted another in the occupation of the soil was doomed by an occult tribunal, from which there was no appeal, to a terrible retribution. His house was visited in the night by whitefeet and ribbonmen—his doom was communicated to him, by the post, in letters, signed by Terry Alt, or Molly M'Guire, or he was suddenly shot, like a dog, by the orders of Captain Rock. Yet even these violent inflictions rather punished than prevented the conduct against which they were directed. The Irish peasant had to choose between starving and assassination. If, in deference to an anonymous mandate, he relinquished his holding, he and those who depended on him were outcasts and wanderers; if he retained or accepted it, his life might be the forfeit, but subsistence was secured; and in poor and lawless countries, the means of living are more valued than life. Those who have treated of the

agrarian crimes of Ireland have remarked, that the facility with which these outrages have been committed has only been equalled by the difficulty of punishing them. A murder, perpetrated at noonday, in the sight of many persons, cannot be proved in a court of justice. The spectators are never witnesses; and it has been inferred from this, that the outrage is national, and that the heart of the populace is with the criminal. But though a chief landlord, or a stipendiary magistrate, may occasionally be sacrificed, the great majority of victims are furnished by the humblest class. Not sympathy, but terror, seals the lip and clouds the eye of the bystander. And this is proved by the fact that while those who have suffered have almost always publicly declared that they were unable to recognize their assailants, and believed them to be strangers, they have frequently, in confidence, furnished the police with the names of the guilty.

Thus, there is this remarkable characteristic of the agrarian anarchy of Ireland which marks it out from all similar conditions of other countries: it is a war of the poor against the poor.

Before the rapid increase of population had forced governments to study political economy and to investigate the means of subsisting a people, statesmen had contented themselves by attributing to political causes these predial disturbances, and by recommending for them political remedies. The course of time, which had aggravated the condition of the Irish peasantry, had increased the numbers, the wealth, and the general importance of those of the middle classes of Ireland who professed the Roman Catholic faith. Shut out from the political privileges of the constitution, these formed a party of discontent that was a

valuable ally to the modern Whigs, too long excluded from that periodical share of power which is the life-blood of a parliamentary government and the safeguard of a constitutional monarchy. The misgovernment of Ireland became therefore a stock topic of the earlier Opposition of the present century; and advocating the cause of their clients, who wished to become mayors, and magistrates, and members of the legislature, they argued that in the concession of those powers and dignities, and perhaps in the discreet confiscation of the property of the Church, the only cures could be found for threatening notices, robbery of arms, administering of unlawful oaths, burglary, murder, and arson.

Yet if these acts of violence were attributable to defective political institutions, why, as was usually the case, were they partial in their occurrence? Why were they limited to particular districts? If political grievances were the cause, the injustice would be as sharp in tranquil Wexford as in turbulent Tipperary. Yet out of the thirty-two counties of Ireland, the outrages prevailed usually in less than a third. These outrages were never insurrectionary: they were not directed against existing authorities; they were stimulated by no public cause or clamour; it was the private individual who was attacked, and for a private reason. This was their characteristic.

But as time elapsed, two considerable events occurred: the Roman Catholic restrictions were repealed, and the Whigs became ministers. Notwithstanding these great changes, the condition of the Irish peasantry remained the same; the tenure of land was unchanged, the modes of its occupation were unaltered, its possession was equally necessary and equally perilous. The same circumstances produced

the same consequences. Notwithstanding even that the Irish Church had been remodelled, and its revenues not only commuted but curtailed; notwithstanding that Roman Catholics had not only become members of Parliament but even Parliament had been reformed; Irish outrage became more flagrant and more extensive than at any previous epoch—and the Whigs were ministers.

Placed in this responsible position, forced to repress the evil, the causes of which they had so often explained, and which with their coöperation had apparently been so effectually removed, the Whig government were obliged to have recourse to the very means which they had so frequently denounced when recommended by their rivals, and that, too, on a scale of unusual magnitude and severity. They proposed for the adoption of Parliament one of those measures which would suspend the constitution of Ireland, and which are generally known by the name of Coercion Acts.

The main and customary provisions of these Coercion Acts were of severe restraint, and scarcely less violent than the conduct they were constructed to repress. They invested the lord lieutenant with power to proclaim a district as disturbed, and then to place its inhabitants without the pale of the established law; persons out of their dwellings between sunset and sunrise were liable to transportation; and to secure the due execution of the law, prisoners were tried before military tribunals, and not by their peers, whose verdicts, from sympathy or terror, were usually found to baffle justice.

These Coercion Acts were effectual; they invariably obtained their end, and the proclaimed districts

became tranquil. But they were an affair of police, not of government; essentially temporary, their effect was almost as transient as their sway, and as they were never accompanied with any deep and sincere attempt to cope with the social circumstances which produced disorder, the recurrence of the chronic anarchy was merely an affair of time. Whether it were that they did not sufficiently apprehend the causes, or that they shrank from a solution which must bring them in contact with the millions of a surplus population, there seems always to have been an understanding between the public men of both parties, that the Irish difficulty should be deemed a purely political, or at the utmost a religious one. And even so late as 1846, no less a personage than the present chief secretary, put forward by his party to oppose an Irish Coercion Bill which themselves had loudly called for, declared that he could not sanction its penal enactments unless they were accompanied by the remedial measures that were necessary, to wit, an Irish Franchise Bill, and a Bill for the amendment of municipal corporations!

When Sir Robert Peel, in 1841, after a memorable opposition of ten years, acceded to office, sustained by all the sympathies of the country, his Irish policy, not sufficiently noticed amid the vast and urgent questions with which he had immediately to deal, was, however, to the political observer significant and interesting. As a mere matter of party tactics, it was not for him too much to impute Irish disturbances to political and religious causes, even if the accumulated experience of the last ten years were not developing a conviction in his mind, that the methods hitherto adopted to ensure the tranquillity of that country were

superficial and fallacious. His cabinet immediately recognized a distinction between political and predial sources of disorder. The first, they resolved into a mere system of agitation, no longer justifiable by the circumstances, and this they determined to put down. The second, they sought in the conditions under which land was occupied, and these they determined to investigate. Hence, on the one hand, the O'Connell prosecution: on the other, the Devon commission.

This was the bold and prudent policy of a minister who felt he had the confidence of the country and was sustained by great parliamentary majorities; and when the summoner of monster meetings was convicted, and the efficient though impartial manner in which the labours of the land commission were simultaneously conducted came to be bruited about, there seemed at last some prospect of the system of political quackery of which Ireland had been so long the victim being at last subverted. But there is nothing in which the power of circumstances is more evident than in politics. They baffle the forethought of statesmen, and control even the apparently inflexible laws of national development and decay.

Had the government of 1841 succeeded in its justifiable expectation of terminating the trade of political agitation in Ireland, armed with all the authority and all the information with which the labours of the land commission would have furnished them, they would in all probability have successfully grappled with the real causes of Irish misery and misrule. They might have thoroughly reformed the modes by which land is holden and occupied; have anticipated the spontaneous emigration that now rages by an administra-

tive enterprise scarcely more costly than the barren loan of '47, and which would have wafted native energies to imperial shores; have limited under these circumstances the evil of the potato famine, even if the improved culture of the interval might not have altogether prevented that visitation; while the laws which regulated the competition between home and foreign industry in agricultural produce might have been modified with so much prudence, or, if necessary, ultimately repealed with so much precaution, that those rapid and startling vicissitudes that have so shattered the social fabric of Ireland might altogether have been avoided.

But it was decreed that it should be otherwise. Having achieved the incredible conviction of O'Connell, by an Irish jury, the great culprit baffled the vengeance of the law by a quirk which a lawyer only could have devised. As regards his Irish policy, Sir Robert Peel never recovered this blow, the severity of which was proportionably increased by its occurrence at a moment of unprecedented success. Resolute not to recur to his ancient Orangeism, yet desperate after his discomfiture of rallying a moderate party around his ministry, his practical mind, more clear-sighted than foreseeing, was alarmed at the absence of all influences for the government of Ireland. The tranquillity which might result from a reformed tenure of the soil, must, if attainable, be a distant blessing, and at present he saw only the obstacles to its fulfilment — prejudiced landlords, and the claims and necessities of pauper millions. He shrank from a theory which might be an illusion. He required a policy for the next post and the next division. There was in his view only one course to take, to outbid his predecessors as

successfully in Irish politics as he was doing in taxes and tariffs. He resolved to appropriate the liberal party of Ireland, and merge it into the great Conservative confederation which was destined to destroy so many things. He acted with promptitude and energy, for Sir Robert Peel never hesitated when he had made up his mind. His real character was very different from his public reputation. Far from being timid and wary, he was audacious and even headstrong. It was his cold and constrained demeanour that misled the public. There never was a man who did such rash things in so circumspect a manner. He had been fortunate in early disembarrassing himself of the Orange counsellors who had conducted his Irish questions when in opposition; vacant judgeships had opportunely satisfied the recognized and respectable claims of Mr. Serjeant Jackson and Mr. Lefroy; and so Sir Robert Peel, without a qualm, suddenly began to govern Ireland by sending it 'messages of peace.'

They took various forms; sometimes a Charitable Bequests Act virtually placed the Roman Catholic hierarchy in friendly equality with the prelates of the Established Church; sometimes a 'godless college' called forth a moan from alarmed and irritated Oxford; the endowment of Maynooth struck wider and deeper, and the middle-classes of England, roused from their religious lethargy, called in vain to the rescue of a Protestantism betrayed. But the minister was unshaken. Successful and self-sufficient, impressed with a conviction that his government in duration would rival that of a Walpole or a Pitt, and exceed both in lustre, he treated every remonstrance with imperious disdain. He had even accustomed his mind to contemplate an ecclesiastical adjustment of

Ireland which would have allied in that country the Papacy with the State, and have terminated the constitutional supremacy of the Anglican Church, when suddenly, in the very heat of all this arrogant fortune, the mighty fabric of delusion shivered and fell to the ground.

An abused and indignant soil repudiated the ungrateful race that had exhausted and degraded its once exuberant bosom. The land refused to hold those who would not hold the land on terms of justice and of science. All the economical palliatives and political pretences of long years seemed only to aggravate the suffering and confusion. The poor-rate was levied upon a community of paupers, and the 'godless colleges' were denounced by Rome as well as Oxford.

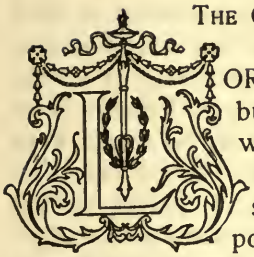
After a wild dream of famine and fever, imperial loans, rates in aid, jobbing public works, confiscated estates, constituencies self-disfranchised, and St. Peter's bearding St. James's in a spirit becoming Christendom rather than Europe, time topped the climax of Irish misgovernment; and by the publication of the census of 1851, proved that the millions with whose evils no statesmen would sincerely deal, but whose condition had been the pretext for so much empiricism, had disappeared, and nature, more powerful than politicians, had settled the 'great difficulty.'

Ere the publication of that document, the mortal career of Sir Robert Peel had closed, and indeed several of the circumstances to which we have just alluded did not occur in his administration; but the contrast between his policy and its results was nevertheless scarcely less striking. It was in '45 that he transmitted his most important 'message of peace'

to Ireland, to be followed by an autumnal visit of her Majesty to that kingdom, painted in complacent and prophetic colours by her prime minister. The visit was not made. In the course of that autumn, ten counties of Ireland were in a state of anarchy; and, mainly in that period, there were 136 homicides committed, 138 houses burned, 483 houses attacked, and 138 fired into; there were 544 cases of aggravated assault, and 551 of robbery of arms; there were 89 cases of bands appearing in arms; there were more than 200 cases of administering unlawful oaths; and there were 1,944 cases of sending threatening letters. By the end of the year, the general crime of Ireland had doubled in amount and enormity compared with the preceding year.

CHAPTER IV.

The Cure for Irish Ills.



ORD GEORGE BENTINCK had large but defined views as to the policy which should be pursued with respect to Ireland. He was a firm supporter of the constitutional preponderance allotted to the land in our scheme of government, not from any jealousy or depreciation of the other great sources of public wealth, for his sympathy with the trading classes was genuine, but because he believed that constitutional preponderance, while not inconsistent with great commercial prosperity, to be the best security for public liberty and the surest foundation of enduring power. But as reality was the characteristic of his vigorous and sagacious nature, he felt that a merely formal preponderance, one not sustained and authorized by an equivalent material superiority, was a position not calculated to endure in the present age, and one especially difficult to maintain with our rapidly increasing population. For this reason he was always very anxious to identify the policy of Great Britain with that of Ireland, the latter being a country essentially agricultural; and he always shrank from

any proposition which admitted a difference in the interests of the two kingdoms.

Liberal politicians, who some years ago were very loud for justice to Ireland, and would maintain at all hazards the identity of the interests of the two countries, have of late frequently found it convenient to omit that kingdom from their statistical bulletins of national prosperity. Lord George Bentinck, on the contrary, would impress on his friends, that if they wished to maintain the territorial constitution of their country, they must allow no sectarian considerations to narrow the basis of sympathy on which it should rest; and in the acres and millions of Ireland, in its soil and its people, equally neglected, he would have sought the natural auxiliaries of our institutions. To secure for our Irish fellow-subjects a regular market for their produce; to develop the resources of their country by public works on a great scale; and to obtain a decent provision for the Roman Catholic priesthood from the land and not from the consolidated fund, were three measures which he looked upon as in the highest degree conservative.

When the project of the cabinet of 1846 had transpired, Lord George at once declared, and was in the habit of reiterating his opinion, that 'it would ruin the 500,000 small farmers of Ireland,' and he watched with great interest and anxiety the conduct of their representatives in the House of Commons. It was with great difficulty that he could bring himself to believe, that political liberalism would induce the members for the south and west of Ireland to support a policy in his opinion so fatal to their countrymen as the unconditional repeal of the corn laws; and, indeed, before they took that step, which almost all of

them have since publicly regretted and attempted to compensate for by their subsequent votes in the House of Commons, the prospect of their conduct frequently and considerably varied.

The Earl of St. Germans, the chief secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, introduced the Coercion Bill to the House of Lords on the 24th of February, and, considering the exigency, and the important reference to it in the speech from the throne, this step on the part of the government was certainly not precipitate. It was observed that the strongest supporters of the measure in the House of Lords on this occasion were the leaders of the Whig party. Lord Lansdowne, 'so far from complaining of the Government for bringing forward the measure at so early a period of the session, was ready to admit, that after the declaration of her Majesty, a declaration unhappily warranted by facts known to many of their lordships, every day was lost in which an effectual remedy was not at least attempted to put an end to a state of society so horrible.' Lord Clanricarde 'gave his ready assent to the bill;' and even Lord Grey, 'though he regretted the necessity for this measure, was of opinion that the chief secretary had established a sufficient case for arming the executive government with some additional powers.' When, therefore, at the end of the month of March, Lord George Bentinck was invited to attend a meeting of his friends, held at the house of Mr. Bankes, to consider the course which should be adopted by the Protectionist party with respect to the Coercion Bill, it was assumed, as a matter of course, that the coalition of the government and the Whigs must secure the passing of the measure, even if the Protectionists were disposed, for the

chance of embarrassing the ministry, to resist it; and of course there was no great tendency in that direction. Men are apt to believe that crime and coercion are inevitably associated. There was abundance of precedent for the course, which seemed also a natural one.

In less than a century there had been seventeen coercive acts for Ireland, a circumstance which might make some ponder whether such legislation were as efficacious as it was violent. However, assassination rife, Captain Rock and Molly M'Guire out at night, Whigs and Tories all agreed, it was easy to catch at a glance the foregone conclusion of the meeting. One advantage of having a recognized organ of a political party is, that its members do not decide too precipitately. They listen before they determine, and if they have a doubt, they will grant the benefit of it to him whose general ability they have acknowledged, and to whom they willingly give credit for having viewed the question at issue in a more laborious and painful manner than themselves. Without a leader, they commit themselves to opinions carelessly and hastily adopted. This is fatal to a party in debate; but it often entails very serious consequences when the mistakes have been committed in a less public and responsible scene than the House of Commons.

In the present case, there was only one individual who took any considerable lead in the management of the party who ventured to suggest the expediency of pausing before they pledged themselves to support an unconstitutional measure, proposed by a government against which they were arrayed under circumstances of urgent and unusual opposition. The support of an unconstitutional measure may be expedient,

but it cannot be denied that it is the most indubitable evidence of confidence. This suggestion, though received with kindness, elicited little sympathy, and Lord George Bentinck, who had not yet spoken, and who always refrained at these meetings from taking that directing part which he never wished to assume, marking the general feeling of those present, and wishing to guide it to a practical result advantageous to their policy, observed that the support of the Coercion Bill by the Protectionists, ought to be made conditional on the government proving the sincerity of their policy by immediately proceeding with their measure; that if life were in such danger in Ireland as was officially stated, and as he was bound to believe, no Corn or Customs' Bill could compete in urgency with the necessity of pressing forward a bill, the object of which was to arrest wholesale assassination. He was, therefore, for giving the government a hearty support, provided they proved they were in earnest in their determination to put down murder and outrage in Ireland, by giving a priority in the conduct of public business to the measure in question.

This view of the situation, which was certainly adroit, for it combined the vindication of order with an indefinite delay of the measures for the repeal of the protective system, seemed to please every one; there was a murmur of approbation, and when one of the most considerable of the country gentlemen expressed the prevalent feeling, and added that all that was now to be desired was that Lord George Bentinck would kindly consent to be the organ of the party on the occasion, and state their view to the House, the cheering was very hearty. It came from

the hearts of more than two hundred gentlemen, scarcely one of whom had a personal object in this almost hopeless struggle beyond the maintenance of a system which he deemed advantageous to his country; but they wished to show their generous admiration of the man who, in the dark hour of difficulty and desertion, had proved his courage and resource, had saved them from public contempt, and taught them to have confidence in themselves. And after all, there are few rewards in life which equal such sympathy from such men. The favour of courts and the applause of senates may have their moments of excitement and delight, but the incident of deepest and most enduring gratification in public life is to possess the cordial confidence of a high-spirited party, for it touches the heart as well as the intellect, and combines all the softer feelings of private life with the ennobling consciousness of public duty.

Lord George Bentinck, deeply moved, consented to become the organ of the Protectionists in this matter; but he repeated in a marked manner his previous declaration, that his duty must be limited to the occasion: he would serve with them, but he could not pretend to be the leader of a party. In that capacity, however, the government chose to recognize him, and there occurred in consequence, very shortly after this meeting, a scene in the House of Commons, which occasioned at the time a great deal of surprise and scandal. The Secretary of the Treasury, in pursuance of one of his principal duties, which is to facilitate by mutual understanding the conduct of public business in the House of Commons, applied to Lord George Bentinck, confessedly at the request of Sir Robert Peel, to 'enter into some arrangement' as to the

conduct of public business before Easter. The arrangement suggested was, that if the Protectionists supported the Coercion Bill, which it was the wish of Sir Robert Peel should be read a first time before Easter, the third reading of the Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws should be postponed until after Easter. The interview by appointment took place in the Vote Office, where the Secretary of the Treasury 'called Lord George aside' and made this proposition. Lord George stated in reply, 'what he believed to be the views of the party with whom he served,' and they were those we have already intimated. The 'arrangement' was concluded, and it was at the same time agreed that certain questions, of which notice had been given by Lord John Russell, relative to the progress of these very measures, should be allowed by the Protectionists to pass *sub silentio*. This 'pledge,' made by the noble lord for himself and his friends, was 'scrupulously observed.' Nevertheless, after all this, a letter arrived from the Secretary of the Treasury, addressed to the noble lord, stating that the secretary 'had not been authorized in saying as much as he had said,' and requesting that the conversation which had taken place might be considered private. Upon this, Lord George Bentinck drew up a statement, 'setting forth all that had passed,' and forwarded it to the secretary as his reply. Subsequently, he met that gentleman, who admitted that 'every word in that statement, as respected the conversation which had passed, was perfectly correct.'

This being the state of the case, on the second night of the debate on Mr. Eliot Yorke's amendment, which we have noticed, and after the adjournment had been moved and carried, the government pro-

ceeded with some motions of form, which indicated their intention to secure, if possible, the third reading of the Corn Bill before Easter. Upon this, Lord George Bentinck, after a hurried and apparently agitated conversation with the Secretary of the Treasury and others connected with the government, rose to move the adjournment of the House. He then gave as his reason the circumstances which we have briefly conveyed. A scene of considerable confusion occurred; the Secretary of the Treasury admitted the correctness of the statement; the First Lord of the Treasury rejected the alleged authority of the secretary. Mr. Tuffnell, on the part of the Whigs, intimated that public business could not be carried on if the recognized organs were repudiated by their chief. The feeling of all parties coincided with Mr. Tuffnell; finally, an Irish repealer rose and announced that the government were bartering their Corn Bill to secure coercion to Ireland. Lord George Bentinck said the Coercion Bill was 'a second Curfew Act,' that nothing but necessity could justify it, and if it were necessary it must be immediate. Sir Robert remained irritated and obstinate. He would not give up a stage either of the Corn Bill or the Coercion Bill; he wanted to advance both before Easter. The mere division of the House between Free-traders and Protectionists had already ceased; there were breakers ahead, and it was not difficult from this night to perceive that the course of the government would not be so summary as they had once expected.

This strange interlude occurred after midnight on the 26th of March. On Friday, the 27th, the House divided on the amendment of Mr. Eliot Yorke, and the Corn Bill was read for the second time. On the

reassembling of the House on Monday, the 30th, an extraordinary scene took place.

It appears that the cabinet, after painful deliberation, had arrived at the conclusion that, notwithstanding the importance of sending up the Corn Bill to the House of Lords before Easter, it was absolutely necessary to proceed at once with the Coercion Bill; and it was resolved that the Secretary of State should on this evening lay before the House the facts and reasons which 'induce the Government to believe in the necessity of the measure.' Mr. O'Connell and his followers had already announced their intention of opposing the first reading of the bill, an allowable but very unusual course. It is competent to the House of Commons to refuse a first reading to any bill sent down to it; but the journals afford few examples of the exercise of such a privilege. A member of the House of Lords may lay on the table, as a matter of pure right, any bill which he thinks proper to introduce, and it is read a first time as a matter of course; the orders of the House of Commons are different, and a member must obtain permission before he introduces a bill. This permission is occasionally refused; but when a bill comes from the House of Lords, the almost invariable custom is to read it for the first time without discussion. There are, however, as we have observed, instances to the contrary, and the Irish Coercion Bill of '33 was one of them. So pregnant a precedent could not be forgotten on the present occasion. The government therefore were prepared for an opposition to the first reading of their bill; but trusting to the strength of their case and the assumed support of the Whig party, they believed that this opposition would not be stubborn, more

especially as there were numerous stages of the measure on which the views of its opponents might be subsequently expressed, and as they themselves were prepared to engage that they would not proceed further than this first reading until the Corn Bill had passed the House of Commons. The consternation, therefore, of the government could scarcely be concealed, when they found on Monday night that they had to encounter a well-organized party opposition, headed by Sir William Somerville, and sanctioned and supported in debate by Lord John Russell and Sir George Grey.

It would seem indeed a difficult and somewhat graceless office for the Whigs to oppose the first reading of a government bill, concerning, too, the highest duties of administration, which had received such unqualified approval from all the leading members of their party in the House of Lords, who had competed in declarations of its necessity and acknowledgments of its moderation, while they only regretted the too tardy progress of a measure so indispensable to the safety of the country and the security of her Majesty's subjects. A curious circumstance, however, saved them from this dilemma, which yet in the strange history of faction they had nevertheless in due time to encounter.

As the Coercion Bill coming from the Lords appeared on the paper of the day in the form of a notice of motion, the Secretary of State, this being a day on which orders have precedence, had to move that such orders of the day should be postponed, so that he might proceed with the motion on the state of Ireland, of which notice had been given. The strict rule of the House is, that on Mondays and Fri-

days, orders of the day should have precedence of notices of motion, so that it was impossible for the Secretary of State to make his motion, that a certain bill (the Protection of Life — Ireland — Bill) should be read a first time without permission of the House, a permission always granted as a matter of course on such nights to the government, since the business which can be brought forward, whether in the shape of orders or motions, is purely government business, and thus the interests and privilege of no independent member of Parliament can be affected by a relaxation of the rules which the convenience of a ministry and the conduct of public business occasionally require. However, on this night, no sooner had the Secretary of State made, in a few formal words, this formal request, than up sprang Sir William Somerville to move an amendment, that the orders of the day should not be postponed, which he supported in a spirited address, mainly on the ground of the great inconvenience that must be suffered from the postponement of the Corn Bill. The motion of the Secretary of State would produce a long, exciting, and exasperating debate. Time would be lost — for what? To advance one stage of a measure which it was avowedly not the intention of the government to press at the present moment. Sir William concluded with a very earnest appeal to Lord George Bentinck and his friends, 'who might at no very distant period have the government of Ireland entrusted to them, not, for the sake of a momentary postponement of the Corn Bill, to place themselves, by voting for this measure of coercion, in collision with the Irish nation.' He called upon Lord George Bentinck to weigh the position in which he was placed.

This amendment was seconded by Mr. Smith O'Brien, the member for the county of Limerick, who warned the government that they 'were entering on a contest which would continue for months.' He taunted the minister with governing the country without a party. What chance was there of reconciliation with his estranged friends? After the treatment of that 'disavowed plenipotentiary,' the Secretary of the Treasury, who would be again found willing to undertake the mission of patching up a truce? He was not present when the terms of the treaty were exposed: but he understood, that if the government introduced this Coercion Bill before Easter, then that Lord George Bentinck would deem it wise, proper, and expedient; but if after Easter, then the complexion and character of the bill were, in the noble lord's judgment, utterly transformed, and it was declared to be quite untenable and unconstitutional. Was that the kind of support on which the government calculated for passing this measure?

The Secretary of State made a dexterous, conciliatory, almost humble address, in reply to the taunts of Mr. Smith O'Brien. He said that he was well aware of the fact of which he had been just reminded, that, in the present state of parties, the declared adherents of the government were a small minority; he even, while excusing the delay in the progress of the Irish measure, reminded the House of the curious fact, that since the meeting of Parliament, two successive Irish secretaries had lost their seats in the House of Commons in consequence of supporting the administration of which they were members.

The case of the government was really so good and clear, that for a moment it seemed the opposition

could hardly persist in their unusual proceeding: but this was a night of misfortunes.

There had been for some time a smouldering feud between the secretary and the Recorder of Dublin. The learned gentleman had seized the occasion which the present state of parties afforded, and in the course of the recent debate on the second reading of the Corn Bill, had declared that the asserted famine in Ireland was, on the part of the government, 'a great exaggeration.' The secretary had addressed himself particularly to this observation in his speech on the 27th, the night of the division, and had noticed it in a tone of acerbity. He had even intimated that it might have been used by one who was a disappointed solicitor for high office, and whom the government had declined to assist in an unwarrantable arrangement of the duties and salary of the judicial post he at present occupied. The learned Recorder, justly indignant at this depreciating innuendo, resolved to make an opportunity on the following Monday for his vindication and retort. He rose, therefore, immediately after the skilful and winning appeal of the secretary, and pronounced an invective against the right honourable gentleman which was neither ill-conceived nor ill-delivered. It revived the passions that for a moment seemed inclined to lull, and the Protectionists, who on this occasion were going to support the government, forgot the common point of union, while the secretary was described as 'the evil genius of the cabinet.'

After this, it was impossible to arrest the course of debate. Mr. O'Connell, who appeared to be in a state of great debility, made one of those acute points for which he was distinguished. He said the govern-

ment complained of the threat held out by those who opposed the bill, that they would avail themselves of the forms of the House to give it every opposition in their power. But what did the government do themselves? Why, they were trying to trample upon one of the sessional orders and to abrogate the forms of the House in order to coerce the Irish people. Lord George Bentinck said, that 'the chief minister had told them, that this was a bill to put down murder and assassination; in that case, if this bill were delayed, the blood of every man murdered in Ireland was on the head of her Majesty's ministers.' Sir George Grey followed, and avoiding any discussion of the state of Ireland, in which Lord George had entered, supported the amendment of Sir William Somerville, on the broad ground that the bill for the repeal of the corn laws ought not to be for a moment delayed. 'The debates on that measure had continued several weeks; and all who had any lengthened parliamentary experience must be convinced, that if the further progress of the Corn Bill was postponed until after Easter, they would have much longer and protracted debates in its future stages, than if the bill were pushed *de die in diem*. As he had understood, the government had intended that this bill should have gone up to the House of Lords before Easter, when it would have been printed, and the second reading could have taken place at an early day after the holidays; but if it were put off until after Easter, he would defy any man to show any reasonable expectation of its getting to a second reading in the other House before June, or July, or even August.'

This was encouraging, and the plot seemed to thicken. The Secretary at War was put up by the

government to neutralize the effect of the speech of Sir George Grey, and he said, 'I speak not only as a cabinet minister, but also as a considerable Irish proprietor.' He said, 'that anything so horrible as the state of demoralization and crime in which many parts of Ireland were plunged, anything so perfect as the suspension of the law in those parts of the country, anything, in short, so complete as the abrogation of liberty that obtained there, was, perhaps never known.' He thought that, 'no man and no minister could, under these circumstances, decline to admit that every and any measure ought to be postponed until a division had been taken, at least upon the principle of a measure which had for its object the suppression of these horrors.' After such a declaration it was clear the government were in a false position when by the same organ it had to state, 'that in asking to read this bill to-night, they only intended to postpone the Corn Bill for one night.'

Lord John Russell following, admitted, that 'in voting for the motion of Sir William Somerville it was not to be supposed, that if the Secretary of State made out a case, he would not support the government bill;' yet how the secretary was ever to find an opportunity of making out his case, if the amendment of Sir William Somerville was carried, was not very apparent. Sir Robert Peel, who was disquieted by the whole proceedings connected with the Coercion Bill, irritated by the episode of 'the disavowed plenipotentiary,' from which he did not for some time recover, and really alarmed at the indefinite prospect of delay in passing his all-important measures which now began to open, could not conceal his vexation in the remarks which he offered, and speak-

ing of the amendment as one 'of a frivolous character,' indignant cries of 'No, no,' from his usual admirers, obliged him to withdraw the expression. His feelings were not soothed when, later in the evening, even Mr. Cobden rose to deplore the conduct of that minister whom he otherwise so much admired. 'He certainly regarded it as a great calamity. Something had actuated the government which he could not understand. He had a perfect belief in the sincerity of the prime minister, but in all human probability the Corn Bill would not now enter the House of Lords before the beginning or middle of May; and when it would come out again, heaven only knew!'

The House now divided, and being supported by all the Protectionists present, the government had a majority of thirty-nine, so the standing order was for that night rescinded; and, although the hour was late for such a statement, the secretary proceeded with the official exposition. Notwithstanding the depressing circumstances of the previous debate, the speech of Sir James Graham was distinguished by all that lucid arrangement of details and that comprehensive management of his subject which distinguished him. The statement made a great impression upon the House and the country; but, unfortunately for the government, the more necessary they made the measure appear, the more unjustifiable was their conduct in not immediately and vehemently pursuing it. They had, indeed, in the speech from the throne at the commencement of this memorable session, taken up a false position for their campaign; and we shall see, as we pursue this narrative of these interesting events, that the fall of Sir Robert Peel was perhaps

occasioned not so much by his repeal of the corn laws as by the mistake in tactics which this adroit and experienced parliamentary commander so strangely committed.

On this night of the 30th the government made no advance; immediately after the secretary had finished, the followers of Mr. O'Connell moved the adjournment of the House, and persisted in this line notwithstanding the almost querulous appeal of the first minister.

CHAPTER V.

The Passing of O'Connell.

LORD GEORGE wrote the next morning (Tuesday, March 31st) to a friend, who had not been able to attend the debate: 'I look upon last night as the most awkward night the government have had yet; I believe they would have given their ears to have been beaten. We have now fairly set them and the tail at loggerheads, and I cannot see how they are to get another stage of either the tariff or Corn Bill before next Tuesday at any rate. I doubt if they will do anything before Easter.'

It was understood that the House would adjourn for the Easter recess on the 8th instant. There were therefore only two nights remaining for government business before the holidays. On the first of these (Friday, April the 3rd), Mr. O'Connell had announced that he should state his views at length on the condition of Ireland, and the causes of these agrarian outrages. Accordingly, when the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate was read, he rose at once to propose an amendment to the motion. He sat in an unusual place—in that generally occupied

by the leader of the opposition — and spoke from the red box, convenient to him from the number of documents to which he had to refer. His appearance was of great debility, and the tones of his voice were very still. His words, indeed, only reached those who were immediately around him and the ministers sitting on the other side of the green table, who listened with that interest and respectful attention which became the occasion.

It was a strange and touching spectacle to those who remembered the form of colossal energy and the clear and thrilling tones that had once startled, disturbed, and controlled senates. Mr. O'Connell was on his legs for nearly two hours, assisted occasionally in the management of his documents by some devoted aide-de-camp. To the House generally it was a performance in dumb show, a feeble old man muttering before a table; but respect for the great parliamentary personage kept all as orderly as if the fortunes of a party hung upon his rhetoric; and though not an accent reached the gallery, means were taken that next morning the country should not lose the last and not the least interesting of the speeches of one who had so long occupied and agitated the mind of nations.

This remarkable address was an abnegation of the whole policy of Mr. O'Connell's career. It proved, by a mass of authentic evidence ranging over a long term of years, that Irish outrage was the consequence of physical misery, and that the social evils of that country could not be successfully encountered by political remedies. To complete the picture, it concluded with a panegyric of Ulster and a patriotic quotation from Lord Clare.

Lord John Russell, who, as an experienced parliamentary leader, had already made more than one effort to extricate the Whigs from the consequences of the hearty support given to the government measures in the other House by Lords Lansdowne and Clanricarde, and even by Lord Grey, ventured to-night even to say that if he should agree that the House would do well to assent to the first reading of this bill, he thought he was bound to state also that in the future stages of it, he should have 'objections to offer, going to the foundations of some of its principal provisions.'

His speech was curious, as perhaps the last considerable manifesto of Whig delusion respecting Ireland. Coercion Bills might be occasionally necessary; no doubt of it; Lord Grey had once a Coercion Bill, and Lord John Russell had voted for it; but then remedial measures ought to be introduced with coercive ones: the evil should be repressed, but also cured. Thus, Lord Althorp, when the government introduced their great Coercion Bill, introduced also a measure which, besides making a great reform in the Protestant Church of Ireland, exempted the whole Catholic community of Ireland from the payment of church cess, which had previously been felt as a very great grievance. On another day Lord Althorp declared his intention of pressing through Parliament a Jury Bill, which had been brought into the House the previous session, but which was allowed to drop in the House of Lords.

Again, there was another declaration which Lord Althorp had made, which, somehow or other, seemed to have been forgotten; it was a declaration with respect to the municipal corporations of Ireland. Lord

Althorp said it was exceedingly desirable that the institutions of the two countries should be assimilated as much as possible; and that, as a general rule, the corporate bodies of Ireland should be the same as England. Mr. O'Connell had said on that occasion that there was no greater grievance in Ireland than the existence of corporations in their then shape. Lord John contrasted this language of Lord Althorp, 'simple, plain, emphatic, and decided,' with the language of the government of Sir Robert Peel; and held up to admiration the Whig policy of 1833, certainly coercive, but with remedial measures—a measure for the abolition of church cess, introduced ten days before the Coercion Bill, and a promise of municipal reform made simultaneously with the proclamation of martial law. This was real statesmanship and touching the root of the evil. Whereas 'Sir Robert Peel had only consented to passing the Municipal Bill in a crippled state, and only now (in 1846) promised, that the corporations of Ireland should be placed on the same footing as the corporations of England.' Who could be surprised that such a policy should end in famine and pestilence?

The followers of Mr. O'Connell again succeeded in adjourning the debate until Monday the 6th. On that day Sir Robert Peel made 'an earnest appeal' to extricate himself from the almost perilous position in which he found his administration suddenly involved. In case the division on the first reading of the Irish Bill should not take place that night, he endeavoured to prevail on those members who had notices on the paper for the following night (Tuesday the 7th), the last night before the holidays, to relinquish their right and to permit the Irish debate to proceed and con-

clude. 'He had no wish to interfere with the due discussion of the measure; but he believed that the Irish members, if they permitted the House to proceed with the Corn Bill, by concluding the discussion on the Irish Bill, would be rendering an essential service to their country.'

But this earnest appeal only influenced still more the fiery resolves of Mr. Smith O'Brien and his friends. They threw the responsibility for delay of the Corn Bill on the government. The inconvenience which the country suffered was occasioned by the minister, not by the Irish members. He ought, on Friday last, to have adjourned the discussion on the Coercion Bill until after Easter. He and other members who were on the paper for to-morrow would willingly relinquish their right of priority in favour of the Corn Bill, or of any measure of a remedial kind, but not in favour of a Coercion Bill. He did not wish to have any concealment with the minister as to the course which the Irish members would pursue. It was their bounden duty to take care that *pari passu* with the discussion of the Coercion Bill there should be discussions as to the misgovernment of Ireland; and that, in the absence of any remedial measures of the government, they should have an opportunity of suggesting such as they thought advisable for removing those evils which they utterly denied that the measure now before the House would remove.

In vain Sir Robert, in his blandest tones and with that remarkable command of a temper not naturally serene which distinguished him, acknowledged to a certain degree the propriety of the course intimated by Mr. Smith O'Brien; but suggested at the same time that it was compatible with allowing the Irish

bill to be now read for a first time, since on its subsequent stages Mr. O'Brien and his friends would have the full opportunity which they desired, of laying before the House the whole condition of the country. All was useless. No less a personage than Mr. John O'Connell treated the appeal with contempt, and lectured the first minister on the 'great mistake' which he had made. Little traits like these revealed the true parliamentary position of the once omnipotent leader of the great Conservative party. With the legions of the Protectionists watching their prey in grim silence, while the liberal sections were united in hostile manœuvres against the government, it was recognised at once that the great minister had a staff without an army; not a reconnoitring could take place without the whole cabinet being under orders, and scarcely a sharpshooter sallied from the opposite ranks without the prime minister returning his fire in person.

Sir Robert Peel mournfully observed that he 'did not wish to provoke a recriminatory discussion,' and he resigned himself to his fate. Immediately the third night of the adjourned debate on the Irish bill commenced, and was sustained principally by the Irish members until a late hour. It had not been the intention of Lord George Bentinck to have spoken on this occasion, though he had never been absent for a moment from his seat, and watched all that occurred with that keen relish which was usual with him when he thought things were going right; but having been personally and not very courteously appealed to by the late Mr. Dillon Browne, and deeming also the occasion, just before the holidays, a not unhappy one, he rose and concluded the debate. His speech was

not long, it was not prepared, and it was very animated.

Recapitulating himself the main features of the disturbed district, he said: 'It is because of these things, sir, that I am prepared to support at least the first reading of a bill, which I freely admit to be most unconstitutional in itself.'

Noticing a speech made in the course of the evening by Lord Morpeth, who had himself once been chief secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord George thought it discreet to remind the House of the unequivocal support given to this bill by the Whig leaders in another place: 'Sir, I think when we see all the great leaders of the Whig party supporting the measure elsewhere, we cannot be justly impugned for doing as they do.' Lord Morpeth had referred to 'remedial measures which he thinks should be introduced for Ireland: to measures for the extension of the municipal, and also of the parliamentary, franchise of that country; and he expressed his desire to see those franchises put on the same footing as the franchises of England.' 'For the life of me,' exclaimed Lord George, 'I confess, I cannot see in what way the extension of political franchises of any description in Ireland would afford a remedy for the evils which this measure aims to suppress. I think, sir, it is impossible not to perceive that there is a connection between agrarian outrage and the poverty of the people.'

After noticing the inadequate poor-law which then existed in Ireland, he added: 'There is also another point immediately connected with this subject to which I must refer. I allude, sir, to the system of absenteeism. I cannot disguise from myself the con-

viction, that many of the evils of Ireland arise from the system of receiving rents by absentee landlords who spend them in other countries. I am well aware that, in holding this doctrine, I am not subscribing to the creed of political economists. I am well aware that Messrs. Senior and M'Culloch hold that it makes no difference whether the Irish landlord spends his rents in Dublin, on his Irish estates, in London, in Bath, or elsewhere. I profess, sir, I cannot understand that theory. I believe that the first ingredient in the happiness of a people is, that the gentry should reside on their native soil, and spend their rents among those from whom they receive them. I cannot help expressing a wish that some arrangement may be made connected with the levying of the poor-rate in Ireland, by which absentee landlords may be made to contribute in something like a fair proportion to the wants of the poor in the district in which they ought to reside. There is an arrangement in the hop-growing districts in England in respect to tithe, which might, I think, afford a very useful suggestion. There are two tithes: the one, the ordinary tithe; the other, extraordinary; which is levied only so long as the land is cultivated in hops. I think if there were two poor-rates introduced into Ireland, the one applying to all occupiers of land, and the other to all those who did not spend a certain portion of the year on some portion of their estates in Ireland, it would prove useful. I think, that by thus appealing to their interests, it might induce absentee landlords to reside much more in Ireland, than is now unfortunately the case.

'But, sir, I think there are other remedial measures. Some days ago, the Secretary of State told the

member for Stroud (Mr. Poulett Scrope), when he suggested some such measure, that he was treading on dangerous ground, and that the doctrines he was advocating might be written in letters of blood in Ireland; but, notwithstanding all this, I still say that I think measures might be introduced for improving the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland. I do not think that some guarantee might and ought to be given to the tenantry of Ireland for the improvements they make upon their farms.

'Sir, the Secretary of State, in introducing this measure, maintained a doctrine which, I think, much more likely to be written in letters of blood, for he bound up the question of the corn laws with the present one. He said, that unless he could have prevailed on his colleagues to accede to his free-trade measures as regards corn, he would not have introduced this bill. Why, sir, far from giving food to the people of Ireland, in my opinion the measures of her Majesty's ministers will take away from the people of Ireland their food, by destroying the profits of their only manufacture — the manufacture of corn — and injuring their agriculture; depriving them of employment; in fact, by taking away from them the very means of procuring subsistence. Sir, I cannot see how the repeal of those laws affecting corn can be in any way connected with the suppression of outrage and the protection of life. What is this but to say, that unless we have a free trade in corn, we must be prepared to concede a free trade in agrarian outrage — a free trade in maiming and houghing cattle — a free trade in incendiarism — a free trade in the burning and sacking of houses — a free trade in midnight murder, and in noon-day assassination? What is this

but telling the people of Ireland, that assassination, murder, incendiarism, are of such light consideration in the eyes of the Secretary of State, that their sanction or suppression by the minister of the crown hinges upon the condition of the corn market and the difference in the price of potatoes?

'Sir, what has the potato disease to do with the outrages in Ireland? Some think a great deal. I have taken the trouble of looking into the matter. I have examined into the state of crime in at least five counties — Tipperary, Roscommon, Limerick, Leitrim, and Clare — and I find, that during the three months prior to the first appearance of the potato disease, and when in fact food was as cheap in Ireland as at almost any former period — when plenty abounded in all quarters of the empire, that the amount of crime exceeded that in the three months immediately following. Now, those who doubt this statement will have an opportunity of ascertaining the correctness of my figures, for I will not deal in general assertions. Well then, sir, I find in the three months, May, June, and July last, that the number of crimes committed in the five counties I have mentioned amounted to no less than 1,180, while in the three months immediately after the potato disease, or famine as it is called, the amount of crime committed in the same three months was not 1,180, but 870.' I should like to know, therefore, what this agrarian outrage has to do with the potato famine; and where is the justification for a minister coming down to this House, and declaring that unless we pass a free-trade measure, we are not to obey her Majesty's commands by passing a measure for the protection of life in Ireland. Why, sir, I think when this language reaches the

people of Ireland — coming, too, as it does from the Treasury, above all, from the Secretary of State for the Home Department — there is indeed danger to be apprehended that such a doctrine may be written in letters of blood in that country. Why, sir, if we are to hear such language as this from that minister of the crown charged with the peace of the country, we may just as well have Captain Rock established as lord lieutenant in the castle of Dublin, a Whitefoot for chief secretary, and Molly M'Guire installed at Whitehall with the seals of the home department.'

And afterwards he remarked, 'I have been taunted that when I may be entrusted with the government of Ireland, I should perhaps then learn that Tyrone was an Orange county. Sir, in answer to that taunt, I must take leave to ask what expression of mine, either in this house or out of it, justifies any such remark? When or where can it be said that I have ever permitted myself to know any distinction between an Orangeman and a Catholic; when, in the whole course of my parliamentary career, have I ever given a vote or uttered a sentiment hostile or unfriendly to the Roman Catholics, either of England or Ireland?'

This speech, though delivered generally in favour of the Irish bill, attracted very much the attention, and, as it appeared afterwards, the approbation of those Irish members, who, although sitting on the Liberal benches, did not acknowledge the infallible authority of Mr. O'Connell, and was the origin of a political connection between them and Lord George Bentinck, which, on more than one subsequent occasion, promised to bring important results.

Two successive motions were now made for the adjournment of the debate, and Sir Robert Peel at

length said, that he 'saw it was useless to persist.' He agreed to the adjournment until the next day, with the understanding that if it did come on, he would name the time to which it should be postponed after the holidays.

Upon this, Sir William Somerville made one more appeal to the minister to postpone the further discussion of the Irish bill altogether until the Corn Bill had passed the Commons. He intimated that unless the government at once adopted this resolution, they would find themselves after Easter in the same perplexity which now paralyzed them. They would not be permitted to bring on this measure except upon government nights, and the discussion might then last weeks.

The minister, exceedingly embarrassed, would not, however, relent. On the following day, when he moved the adjournment of the House for the holidays, he reduced the vacation three days, in order to obtain Friday, a government night, which otherwise would have been absorbed in the holidays, and he announced the determination of the government again to proceed on that night with the Irish bill in preference to the Corn Bill. The Irish members glanced defiance, and the Protectionists could scarcely conceal their satisfaction. The reputation of Sir Robert Peel for parliamentary management seemed to be vanishing; never was a government in a more tottering state; and the Whigs especially began to renew their laments that the Edinburgh letter and its consequences had prevented the settlement of the corn question from devolving to the natural arbitrator in the great controversy, their somewhat rash but still unrivalled leader, Lord John Russell.

CHAPTER VI.

A Third Party.

HE members of the Protectionist opposition returned to their constituents with the sanguine feelings which success naturally inspires. Their efforts had surprised, not displeased, the country; the elections were in their favour; the government business halted; the delay in the calculated arrival of the famine had taken the edge off the necessity which it was supposed would have already carried the Corn Bill through the Commons; while the twin measure which the throes of Ireland had engendered had developed elements of opposition which even the calmest observer thought might possibly end in overthrow. Above all, that seemed to have happened which the most experienced in parliamentary life had always deemed to be impracticable; namely, the formation of a third party in the House of Commons.

How completely this latter and difficult result was owing to the abilities and energies of one man, and how anomalous was the position which he chose to occupy in not taking the formal lead of a party which

was entirely guided by his example, were convictions and considerations that at this juncture much occupied men's minds. And it was resolved among the most considerable of the country gentlemen to make some earnest and well-combined effort, during the recess, to induce Lord George Bentinck to waive the unwillingness he had so often expressed of becoming their avowed and responsible leader.

When Lord George Bentinck first threw himself into the breach, he was influenced only by a feeling of indignation at the manner in which he thought the Conservative party had been trifled with by the government and Lord Stanley, his personal friend and political leader, deserted by a majority of the cabinet. As affairs developed, and it became evident that the bulk of the Conservative party throughout the country had rallied round his standard, Lord George could not conceal from himself the consequences of such an event, or believe that it was possible that the party in the House of Commons, although Lord Stanley might eventually think fit to guide it by his counsels, and become, if necessary, personally responsible for its policy, could be long held together unless it were conducted by a leader present in the same assembly, and competent under all circumstances to represent its opinions in debate. Lord George, although a very proud man, had no vanity or self-conceit. He took a very humble view of his own powers, and he had at the same time a very exalted one of those necessary to a leader of the House of Commons. His illustrious connection, Mr. Canning, was his standard. He had been the private secretary of that minister in his youth, and the dazzling qualities of that eminent personage had influenced the most susceptible time of life of one

who was very tenacious of his impressions. What Lord George Bentinck appreciated most in a parliamentary speaker was brilliancy: quickness of perception, promptness of repartee, clear and concise argument, a fresh and felicitous quotation, wit and picture, and, if necessary, a passionate appeal that should never pass the line of high-bred sentiment. Believing himself not to be distinguished by these rhetorical qualities, he would listen with no complacency to those who would urge in private that the present period of parliamentary life was different from the days of Mr. Canning, and that accumulated facts and well-digested reasoning on their bearing, a command of all the materials of commercial controversy, and a mastery of the laws that regulate the production and distribution of public wealth, combined with habits of great diligence and application, would ensure the attention of a popular assembly, especially when united to a high character and great social position. This might be urged; but he would only shake his head, with a ray of humour twinkling in his piercing eyes, and say, in a half-drawling tone, 'If Mr. Canning were alive, he could do all this better than any of them, and be not a whit less brilliant.'

There was also another reason why Lord George Bentinck was unwilling to assume the post of leader of the Conservative party, and this very much influenced him. Sprung from a great Whig house, and inheriting all the principles and prejudices of that renowned political connection which had expelled the Stuarts, he had accepted, in an unqualified sense, the dogma of religious liberty. This principle was first introduced into active politics in order to preserve the possessions of that portion of the aristocracy which

had established itself on the plunder of the Church. It was to form the basis of a party which should prevent reaction and restitution of church lands. Whether the principle be a true one, and whether its unqualified application by any party in the state be possible, are questions yet unsettled. It is not probable, for example, that the worship of Juggernaut, which Lord Dalhousie permits in Orissa, would be permitted even by Lord John Russell at Westminster. Even a papist procession is forbidden, and wisely. The application of the principle, however, in Lord George Bentinck's mind, was among other things associated with the public recognition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy by the state, and a provision for its maintenance in Ireland in accordance with the plan of Mr. Pitt. What had happened, with respect to the vote on the endowment of Maynooth in 1845, had convinced him that his opinions on this subject presented an insuperable barrier to his ever becoming the leader of a party which had contributed three-fourths of the memorable minority on that occasion. It was in vain that it was impressed upon him by those most renowned for their Protestant principles, and who were at the same time most anxious to see Lord George Bentinck in his right position, that the question of Maynooth was settled, and there was now no prospect of future measures of a similar character. This was not the opinion of Lord George Bentinck. He nursed in his secret soul a great scheme for the regeneration and settlement of Ireland, which he thought ought to be one of the mainstays of a Conservative party; and it was his opinion that the condition of the Roman Catholic priesthood must be considered.

It was in vain, in order to assist in removing these scruples, that it was represented to him by others that endowment of a priesthood by the state was a notion somewhat old-fashioned, and opposed to the spirit of the age which associated true religious freedom with the full development of the voluntary principle. He listened to these suggestions with distrust, and even with a little contempt. Mr. Canning had been in favour of the endowment of the Irish priesthood—that was sufficient for that particular; and as for the voluntary principle, he looked upon it as priestcraft in disguise; his idea of religious liberty being that all religions should be controlled by the state.

Besides these two prominent objections to accepting the offered post, namely, his unaffected distrust in his parliamentary abilities and his assumed want of concordance with his followers on a great principle of modern politics, we must also remember that his compliance with the request involved no ordinary sacrifice of much which renders life delightful. He was to relinquish pursuits of noble excitement to which he was passionately attached, and to withdraw in a great degree from a circle of high-spirited friends, many of them of different political connection from himself, by whom he was adored. With all his unrivalled powers of application when under the influence of a great impulse, he was constitutionally indolent and even lethargic. There was nothing, therefore, in his position or his temperature to prick him on in '46; it was nothing but his strong will acting upon his indignation which sustained him. It is not, therefore, marvellous that he exhibited great reluctance to commit irretrievably his future life. At

a subsequent period, indignation had become ambition, and circumstances of various kinds had made him resolve to succeed or die.

On the adjournment, Lord George had gone down to Newmarket, which he greatly enjoyed after his exhausting campaign. Here some letters on the subject of the leadership passed, but nothing was definitely arranged till some time after the re-assembling of Parliament. For convenience we mention here the result. The wish of the party was repeatedly and personally urged by the popular and much-esteemed member for Dorsetshire, and at last Lord George consented to their wishes, on these conditions: that he should relinquish his post the moment the right man was discovered, who, according to his theory, would ultimately turn up; and secondly, that his responsible post was not to restrict or embarrass him on any questions in which a religious principle was involved.

Before, however, this negotiation was concluded, and while yet at Newmarket, he wrote to a friend, the day before the House met (April 16th).

'I think there is no doubt, but that the Irish will take care of Friday (to-morrow) night. I have not much hope of their keeping up the debate beyond Friday.

'It is quite clear from O'Connell's language at Dublin that we have no hope from the Irish tail.

'I still think myself, that delay affords a great chance of something turning up in our favour; already the rejection of any reciprocity by M. Guizot has provided us with a grand weapon, which, I trust, you drive well home into * * * *'s vitals; a very short delay would probably bring over similar intelligence from

the United States and their Congress. I trust we shall have an important deputation over from Canada, representing that the inevitable results of these free-trade measures in corn and timber will be to alienate the feelings of our Canadian colonists, and to induce them to follow their sordid interests, which will now, undoubtedly, be best consulted and most promoted by annexation to the United States.

'Lord ——'s intended tergiversation has been, I believe, some time known; he admits that all farmers without capital, in short, all little men, must be sacrificed. What a barbarous and odious policy, that goes upon the principle that none but capitalists are henceforth to be allowed to live, as farmers at least. We must turn the tables upon Lord —— and all such heartless doctrinaires!

'I fear the majority in the Lords will be greater than was expected; I am told that we must endeavour to put ministers in a minority two or three times before the bill gets to its second reading in the Lords, no matter upon what question. I hear there are many peers whose votes depend entirely upon their notions, whether or not Peel can, by hook or by crook, carry on.'

CHAPTER VII.

Railroads for Ireland.

IF WE take a general view of the career of Lord George Bentinck during the last year—from the time indeed when he was trying to find a lawyer to convey his convictions to the House of Commons until the moment when her Majesty prorogued her Parliament, the results will be found to be very remarkable. So much was never done so unexpectedly by any public man in the same space of time. He had rallied a great party which seemed hopelessly routed; he had established a parliamentary discipline in their ranks which old political connections, led by experienced statesmen, have seldom surpassed; he had brought forward from those ranks, entirely through his discrimination and by his personal encouragement, considerable talents in debate; he had himself proved a master in detail and in argument of all the great questions arising out of the reconstruction of our commercial system; he had made a vindication of the results of the Protective principle as applied to agriculture, which certainly, so far as the materials are concerned, is the most efficient plea that ever was urged in the

House of Commons in favour of the abrogated law; he had exhibited similar instances of investigation in considerable statements with respect to the silk trade and other branches of our industry; he had asserted the claims of the productive classes in Ireland, and in our timber and sugar producing colonies, with the effect which results from a thorough acquaintance with a subject; he had promulgated distinct principles with regard to our financial as well as to our commercial system; he had maintained the expediency of relieving the consumer by the repeal of excise in preference to customs' duties, and of establishing fiscal reciprocity as a condition of mercantile exchange. On subjects of a more occasional but analogous nature he had shown promptitude and knowledge, as in the instances of the urgent condition of Mexico and of our carrying trade with the Spanish colonies, both of which he brought forward in the last hours of the session, but the importance of which motions was recognized by all parties. Finally, he had attracted the notice, and in many instances obtained the confidence, of large bodies of men in the country, who recognized in him a great capacity of labour combined with firmness of character and honesty of purpose.

At the close of the session (August 28), Lord George visited Norfolk, where he received an entertainment from his constituents at King's Lynn, proud of their member, and to whom he vindicated the course which he had taken, and offered his views generally as to the relations which should subsist between the legislation of the country and its industry. From Norfolk he repaired to Belvoir Castle, on a visit to the Duke of Rutland, and was present at a ban-

quet given by the agriculturists of Leicestershire to his friend and supporter the Marquis of Granby. After this he returned to Welbeck, where he seems to have enjoyed a little repose. Thus he writes to a friend from that place on the 22nd September:

'Thanks for your advice, which I am following, having got Lord Malmesbury's Diary; but I am relapsing into my natural dawdling, lazy, and somnolent habits, and can with difficulty get through the leaders even of the "Times."

* * * * 'The vehemence of the farmers is personal against Peel; it is quite clear that the rising price of wheat has cured their alarm. The railway expenditure must keep up prices and prosperity; both of which would have been far greater without free trade; but in face of high prices, railway prosperity, and potato famine, depend upon it we shall have an uphill game to fight.

'O'Connell talks of Parliament meeting in November, to mend the Irish Labour-rate Act. Do you believe this?'

The Labour-rate Act, passed at the end of the session ('46), was one by which the Lord Lieutenant was enabled to require special barony sessions to meet in order to make presentments for public works for the employment of the people, the whole of the money requisite for their construction to be supplied by the imperial treasury, though to be afterwards repaid. The machinery of this act did not work satisfactorily, but the government ultimately made the necessary alterations on their own responsibility, and obtained an indemnity from Parliament when it met in '47. The early session, therefore, talked of by Mr. O'Connell, became unnecessary. As the only object of this

Labour-rate Act was to employ the people, and as it was supposed there were no public works of a reproductive nature which could be undertaken on a sufficient scale to ensure that employment, the Irish people were occupied, towards the end of the autumn of '46, mainly in making roads, which, as afterwards described by the first minister, 'were not wanted.' In the month of September more than thirty thousand persons were thus employed; but when the harvest was over, and it was ascertained that its terrible deficiency had converted pauperism into famine, the numbers on the public works became greatly increased, so that at the end of November the amount of persons engaged was four hundred thousand, receiving wages at the rate of nearly five millions sterling per annum. These immense amounts went on increasing every week, and when Parliament met in February, 1847, five hundred thousand persons were employed on these public works, which could bring no possible public advantage, at an expense to the country of between £700,000 and £800,000 per month. No Board of Works could efficiently superintend such a multitude, or prevent flagrant imposition, though the dimensions of that department appeared almost proportionably to have expanded. What with commissioners, chief clerks, check clerks, and pay clerks, the establishment of the Board of Works in Ireland, at the end of '46, consisted of more than eleven thousand persons.

Always intent upon Ireland, this condition of affairs early and earnestly attracted the attention of Lord George Bentinck. So vast an expenditure in unproductive labour dismayed him. He would not easily assent to the conclusion that profitable enterprise un-

der the circumstances was impossible. Such a conclusion seemed to him unnatural, and that an occasion where we commenced with despair justified a bold and venturesome course. The field is legitimately open to speculation where all agree that all is hopeless. The construction of harbours, the development of fisheries, the redemption of waste lands, were resources which had been often canvassed, and whatever their recommendations, with the exception of the last, they were necessarily very limited; and the last, though it might afford prompt, could hardly secure profitable, employment. Prompt and profitable employment was the object which Lord George wished to accomplish. Where millions were to be expended by the state, something more advantageous to the community should accrue than the temporary subsistence of the multitude.

Lord George had always been a great supporter of railway enterprise in England, on the ground that, irrespective of all the peculiar advantages of those undertakings, the money was spent in the country; and that if our surplus capital were not directed to such channels, it would go, as it had gone before, to foreign mines and foreign loans, from which in a great degree no return would arrive. When millions were avowedly to be laid out in useless and unprofitable undertakings, it became a question whether it were not wiser even somewhat to anticipate the time when the necessities of Ireland would require railways on a considerable scale; and whether by embarking in such enterprises, we might not only find prompt and profitable employment for the people, but by giving a new character to the country and increasing its social relations and the combinations of its industry,

might not greatly advance the period when such modes of communication would be absolutely requisite.

Full of these views, Lord George, in the course of the autumn, consulted in confidence some gentlemen very competent to assist him in such an inquiry, and especially Mr. Robert Stephenson, Mr. Hudson, and Mr. Laing. With their advice and at their suggestion, two engineers of great ability, Mr. Bidder and Mr. Smith, were despatched to Ireland, personally to investigate the whole question of railroads in that country.

Meditating over the condition of Ireland, a subject very frequently in his thoughts, and of the means to combat its vast and inveterate pauperism, Lord George was frequently in the habit of reverting to the years '41–'42 in England, when there were fifteen hundred thousand persons on the parish rates; eighty-three thousand able-bodied men, actually confined within the walls of the workhouse, and more than four hundred thousand able-bodied men receiving out-door relief. What changed all this and restored England in a very brief space to a condition of affluence hardly before known in her annals? Not certainly the alterations in the tariff which were made by Sir Robert Peel at the commencement of his government, prudent and salutary as they were. No one would pretend that the abolition of the slight duty (five-sixteenths of a penny) on the raw material of the cotton manufacturer, or the free introduction of some twenty-seven thousand head of foreign cattle, or even the admission of foreign timber at reduced duties, could have effected this. Unquestionably it was the railway enterprise which then began to prevail that was the cause of this national renovation. Suddenly, and for several

years, an additional sum of thirteen millions of pounds sterling a year was spent in the wages of our native industry; two hundred thousand able-bodied labourers received each upon an average twenty-two shillings a week, stimulating the revenue both in excise and customs by their enormous consumption of malt and spirits, tobacco and tea. This was the main cause of the contrast between the England of '41 and the England of '45.

Was there any reason why a proportionate application of the same remedy to Ireland should not proportionately produce a similar result? Was there anything wild or unauthorized in the suggestion? On the contrary: ten years before (1836), the subject had engaged the attention of her Majesty's government, and a royal commission had been issued to inquire into the expediency of establishing railway communication in Ireland. The commissioners, men of great eminence, recommended that a system of railways should be established in Ireland, and by the pecuniary assistance of government. They rested their recommendation mainly on the abundant evidence existing of the vast benefits which easy communication had accomplished in Ireland, and of the complete success which had attended every Parliamentary grant for improving roads in that country.

The weakness of the government, arising from the balanced state of parties, rendered it impossible at that time for them to prosecute the measures recommended by the royal commissioners, though they made an ineffectual attempt in that direction. Could it be suspected that the recommendation of the commissioners had been biassed by any political consideration? Was it a Whig commission attempting to

fulfil a Whig object? Another commission, more memorable, at the head of which was the Earl of Devon, was appointed by a Tory government some years afterwards, virtually to consider the condition of the people of Ireland, and the best means for their amelioration. The report of the Devon commission confirmed all the recommendations of the railway commissioners of '36, and pointed to these new methods of communication, by the assistance of loans from the government, as the best means of providing employment for the people.

When Mr. Smith of Deanston was examined by a Parliamentary committee, and asked what measure of all others would be the one most calculated to improve the agriculture and condition of Ireland, he did not reply, as some might have anticipated, that the most efficient measure would be to drain the bogs; but his answer was, 'advance the construction of railways, and then agricultural improvement will speedily follow.'

To illustrate the value of railways to an agricultural population, Mr. Smith, of Deanston, said, 'that the improvement of the land for one mile only on each side of the railway so constructed would be so great, that it would pay the cost of the whole construction.' He added, that there were few districts in Ireland, in which railway communication could be introduced, where the value of the country through which the railway passed would not be raised to an extent equal to the whole cost of the railway.

Arguing on an area of six hundred and forty acres for every square mile, after deducting the land occupied by fences, roads, and buildings, Mr. Smith, of Deanston, entered into a calculation of the gain de-

rivable from the mere carriage of the produce of the land, and the back carriage of manure, coals, tiles, bricks, and other materials, and estimated the saving through those means on every square mile to more than £300, or something above £600 on 1,280 acres abutting each mile of railway, this being the difference of the cost of carriage under the old mode of conveyance as compared with the new. Following up this calculation, he showed that fifteen hundred miles of railway would improve the land through which it passed to the extent of nearly two million acres at the rate of a mile on each side; and, taken at twenty-five years' purchase, would equal twenty-four millions sterling in the permanent improvement of the land.

The ground, therefore, was sound on which Lord George cautiously, and after due reflection, ventured to place his foot.

And now, after the reports of these two royal commissions, what was the state of railway enterprise in Ireland in the autumn of '46, when a vast multitude could only subsist by being employed by the government, and when the government had avowedly no reproductive or even useful work whereon to place them; but allotted them to operations which were described by Colonel Douglas, the inspector of the government himself, 'as works which would answer no other purpose than that of obstructing the public conveyances?'

In '46, acts of Parliament were in existence authorizing the construction of more than fifteen hundred miles of railway in Ireland, and some of these acts had passed so long as eleven years previously, yet at the end of '46 only one hundred and twenty-three

miles of railway had been completed, and only one hundred and sixty-four were in the course of completion, though arrested in their progress from want of funds. Almost in the same period, two thousand six hundred miles of railway had been completed in England, and acts of Parliament had passed for constructing five thousand four hundred miles in addition: in the whole, eight thousand miles.

What then was the reason of this debility in Ireland in prosecuting these undertakings? Were they really not required; were the elements of success wanting? The first element of success in railway enterprise, according to the highest authorities, is population; property is only the second consideration. Now, Ireland in '46 was more densely inhabited than England. A want of population could not therefore be the cause. But a population so impoverished as the Irish could not perhaps avail themselves of the means of locomotion; and yet it appeared from research that the rate of passengers on the two Irish railways that were open greatly exceeded in number that of the passengers upon English and Scotch railways. The average number of passengers on English and Scotch railways was not twelve thousand per mile per annum, while on the Ulster railway the number was nearly twenty-two thousand, and on the Dublin and Drogheda line the number exceeded eighteen thousand.

The cause of the weakness in Ireland to prosecute these undertakings was the total want of domestic capital for the purpose, and the unwillingness of English capitalists to embark their funds in a country whose social and political condition they viewed with distrust, however promising and even profitable

the investment might otherwise appear. This was remarkably illustrated by the instance of the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland, one of the undertakings of which the completion was arrested by want of funds, yet partially open. Compared with a well-known railway in Great Britain, the Irish railway had cost in its construction £15,000 per mile, and the British upwards of £26,000 per mile; the weekly traffic on the two railways, allowing for some difference in their extent, was about the same on both, in amount varying from £1,000 to £1,300 per week; yet the unfinished British railway was at £40 premium in the market, and the incomplete Irish railway at £2 discount. It was clear, therefore, that the commercial principle, omnipotent in England, was not competent to cope with the peculiar circumstances of Ireland.

Brooding over the suggestions afforded by the details which we have slightly indicated, Lord George Bentinck, taking into consideration not merely the advantage that would accrue to the country from the establishment of a system of railroads, but also remembering the peculiar circumstances of the times, the absolute necessity of employing the people, and the inevitable advance of public money for that purpose, framed a scheme with reference to all these considerations, and which he believed would meet all the conditions of the case. He spared no thought, or time, or labour, for his purpose. He availed himself of the advice of the most experienced, and prosecuted his researches ardently and thoroughly. When he had matured his scheme, he had it thrown into the form of a parliamentary bill by the ablest hands, and then submitted the whole to the judgment and

criticism of those who shared his confidence and counsels. Towards the end of November he was at Knowsley, from whence he communicated with the writer of these pages. 'I am here hatching secret plans for the next session; and now, if you have not quite abjured politics, as you threatened for the next three months to do, devoting yourself to poetry and romance, I think I ought to have a quiet day with you, in order that we may hold council together and talk over all our policy. I shall be at Harcourt House on the 30th. I shall stay there till the 3rd of December, for a meeting on that day of the Norfolk Estuary Company, of which I am chairman. Would that evening suit you—or Friday—or Wednesday? I am not well acquainted with the geography of Buckinghamshire, but presume you are accessible either by rail or road in less than twelve hours.

'The activity in the dockyard must be in preparation to interfere in Portugal, to keep King Leopold upon the Portuguese throne: it cannot be for Mexico, for our friend the "Times" formally abandoned Mexico in his leader some days ago.

'* * * * has been entertaining Lord * * * * in Ireland, and writes: "How Peel must chuckle at the Whig difficulties." I dare say he does, but in Ireland it seems to me Lord Besborough is putting the late Irish government to shame, whilst the rupture of the *entente cordiale,* the conquest of California and New Mexico, and the complications in the river Plata, are complete inheritances from Lord Aberdeen.

'Eaton has come to life again: else there was a prospect of George Manners quietly succeeding him in Cambridgeshire. I fear we shall do no good in Lincolnshire, notwithstanding the industry of our dear

friend the "Morning Post," in getting hold of Lord Ebrington's and Lord Rich's letters to Lord Yarborough. I suppose there is no mistake in Lord Dalhousie ("the large trout") going out to Bombay with the reversion of Bengal.

'The duchy of Lancaster is to be put in commission, Lord * * * * to be one of the commissioners, *but unpaid.* He has begun, I presume, to overcome the false delicacy which prevented his acceptance of office under the Whigs in July. S * * * * thought G * * * * was to be another of the Board, but that turns out a mistake, but Lord H * * * * is to be.

'The manufacturers are working short time, and reducing wages in all directions, John Bright and Sons at Rochdale among the rest. The Zollverein increasing their import duties on cotton and linen yarn, and putting export duties of 25 per cent. (some of the states at least) on grain.'

We must not omit to record, that in the autumn of this year, at Goodwood races, the sporting world was astounded by hearing that Lord George Bentinck had parted with his racing stud at an almost nominal price. Lord George was present, as was his custom, at this meeting, held in the demesne of one who was among his dearest friends. Lord George was not only present but apparently absorbed in the sport, and his horses were very successful. The world has hardly done justice to the great sacrifice which he made on this occasion to a high sense of duty. He not only parted with the finest racing stud in England, but he parted with it at a moment when its prospects were never so brilliant; and he knew this well. We may have hereafter to notice on this head an interesting passage in his life.

He could scarcely have quitted the turf that day without a pang. He had become the lord paramount of that strange world, so difficult to sway, and which requires for its government both a stern resolve and a courtly breeding. He had them both; and though the blackleg might quail before the awful scrutiny of his piercing eye, there never was a man so scrupulously polite to his inferiors as Lord George Bentinck. The turf, too, was not merely the scene of the triumphs of his stud and his betting-book. He had purified its practice and had elevated its character, and he was prouder of this achievement than of any other connected with his sporting life. Notwithstanding his mighty stakes and the keenness with which he backed his opinion, no one perhaps ever cared less for money. His habits were severely simple, and he was the most generous of men. He valued the acquisition of money on the turf, because there it was the test of success. He counted his thousands after a great race as a victorious general counts his cannon and his prisoners.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Versatility of Lord George Bentinck.

HOSE who throw their eye over the debates of the session of '47, cannot fail to be struck by the variety of important questions in the discussion of which Lord George Bentinck took a leading or prominent part. And it must be borne in mind that he never offered his opinion on any subject which he had not diligently investigated and attempted to comprehend in all its bearings. His opponents might object to his principles or challenge his conclusions, but no one could deny that his conclusions were drawn from extensive information and that his principles were clear and distinct. He spared no pains to acquire by reading, correspondence, and personal research, the most authentic intelligence on every subject in debate. He never chattered. He never uttered a sentence in the House of Commons which did not convey a conviction or a fact. He was too profuse indeed with his facts: he had not the art of condensation. But those who have occasion to refer to his speeches and calmly to examine them, will be struck by the amplitude and

the freshness of his knowledge, the clearness of his views, the coherence in all his efforts, and often—a point for which he never had sufficient credit—by his graphic idiom.

The best speech on the affairs of Cracow, for example, the most vigorous and the best informed, touching all the points with a thorough acquaintance, was that of Lord George Bentinck. The discussion on Cracow, which lasted several nights and followed very shortly after the defeat of his Irish bill, appeared to relate to a class of subjects which would not have engaged his attention; but on the contrary, he had given days and nights to this theme, had critically examined all the documents, and conferred with those qualified to supply him with any supplementary information requisite. He spoke several times this session on questions connected with our foreign affairs, and always impressed the House with a conviction that he was addressing it after a due study of his subject: as for example, his speech against our interference in Portugal, and the statement in which he brought forward the claims of the holders of Spanish bonds on the government of Spain before the House of Commons. In the instance of Portugal, a motion of censure on the conduct of ministers had been introduced by Mr. Hume, and the government were only saved from a minority by the friendly interposition of Mr. Duncombe, who proposed an amendment to the motion of Mr. Hume which broke the line of the liberal force. Lord George Bentinck in this case followed Mr. Macaulay, whose speech, as was his wont, had been rich in historical illustration. 'The right honourable and learned member for Edinburgh,' Lord George replied, 'had entered into a very inter-

esting history of various interferences which had taken place in the affairs of Portugal; but in making that statement he forgot to mention one circumstance which had occurred in that history, and it was this —that when Philip II. of Spain sought to conquer Portugal, the method he had recourse to for that purpose was one which he thought her Majesty's ministers had successfully practised on the present occasion —he persuaded the leaders in Portugal to mix sand with the powder of their troops. And so, on this occasion, her Majesty's ministers had prevailed on the member for Finsbury, and those other members who were so ready to profess a love of liberty, to mix sand with their powder.'

In a previous chapter we have treated at some length of the means proposed or adopted by the Parliament for the sustenance and relief of the people of Ireland. The new poor law for that country also much engaged the attention of both Houses this session. Lord George Bentinck took a very active part in these transactions, and moved the most important of all the amendments to the government measure, namely, an attempt to assimilate the poor law of Ireland as much as possible to that of England, and make the entire rates be paid by the occupying tenant. His object, he said, was to 'prevent lavish expenditure and encourage profitable employment to the people.' This amendment was only lost by a majority of four.

On the 26th of March, on the government bringing forward their bill on the rum duties, Lord George Bentinck brought before the House the case of the British and Irish distillers, not with any preference or partiality towards English, Scotch, or Irish distillers

over the colonial producer. 'I am no advocate of any monopoly whatever. I desire only equal and exact justice between both parties; and the only way in which that end can, in my opinion, be properly attained, is in a select committee upstairs, consisting of impartial members of this house.'

He often used to say that no subject ever gave him more trouble thoroughly to master than the spirit duties; and he noticed the character of the theme at the beginning of his speech. He said he required, not only the most especial indulgence, but even the toleration of the House, 'for of all the dry and dull subjects which could possibly be introduced, the question which it is now my misfortune to bring under the consideration of the House is the driest and the dullest. If this question had been one merely of pounds, shillings, and pence, it would have been dull and complicated enough; but this is a question in which are concerned not pounds and shillings, but pence, and halfpence, and farthings.'

The Whitsuntide holidays occurred at the end of May. It had originally been the intention of Lord George Bentinck, at the request of leading merchants and manufacturers of all parties and opinions, to have brought forward the question of the Bank Act after these holidays, and to move a resolution that some discretionary power should be established as to the issue of notes. He thus alludes to this point in a letter to Mr. Wright, of the 24th of May:—

'I return you No. 1019, of the "Bankers' Circular," with many thanks.

'This delightful and timely change in the weather will do wonders for the country, and by producing an abundant and seasonable harvest, will save the coun-

try, and *may save the Bank Charter Act;* but it is pretty well settled that I am to give notice immediately after the holidays, of a resolution very much in the spirit of the memorial contained in the paper I am returning to you.

'Things are better in the City and at Liverpool, and with this weather will continue to improve; but it seems to me any reverse in the weather, such as would occasion a late and deficient harvest, could not fail to bring the commerce of the country to a dead lock.

'The opinion is gaining ground, that in the present state not only of Ireland, but of many districts in England, the government will not venture upon a general election till after the harvest, and not then, unless the harvest should prove favourable.

'I am glad to read your opinion in opposition to Lord Ashburton's, that railways keep the gold in the country, and do not send it out. Glyn gave strong evidence last year to this effect before the railway committee.'

Neither of the prospects in this letter was realised. The commercial and manufacturing interest, after the Whitsun recess, thought it advisable for reasons of great weight that Lord George Bentinck should postpone for a month or six weeks his intended motion on the Bank Charter, and the ministers resolved to dissolve Parliament before the harvest: thus it happened that the merchants and manufacturers lost their chance of relief from the yoke, and experienced the reign of terror in the autumn, the terrible events of which ultimately occasioned the assembling of the new Parliament in November.

Anticipating the immediate dissolution of Parliament, Sir Robert Peel had issued an address to the

electors of Tamworth, justifying his commercial policy. In the opinion of Lord George Bentinck it set forth a statement as to the effect and operation of those financial measures which had taken place in the course of the last six years, which, if left altogether unrefuted, might have a dangerous tendency at the coming elections. The general effect of that statement was, that by the reduction of duties to a large extent, it was possible to relieve the people of this country of burdens amounting to more than seven millions and a half sterling with little or no loss whatever to the revenue. But the truth was, Sir Robert Peel in his reductions had dealt only with little more than ten millions sterling of the revenue of the country, and had left the remaining thirty-seven millions untouched. Now on that portion of the revenue with which alone he had dealt, there was a deficiency, through his changes, to the amount of five millions sterling, which loss was compensated by the increase on those very articles which Sir Robert had left untouched. It was the opinion of Lord George Bentinck that the conclusion which Sir Robert Peel had drawn from the comparatively barren results of the increased duties on imports carried by the Whigs in 1840, viz., that indirect taxation had reached its limit, and which was indeed the basis of his new system, was a fallacy, and that the anticipated increase of import duties had not accrued in 1840 in consequence of our having had three successive bad harvests, 'and a bad cotton crop to boot,' all of which had checked the consuming power of the community. Sir Robert Peel had been favoured by three successive good harvests and nearly £100,000,000 invested in six years in domestic enterprise. 'The interposition of Provi-

dence,' said Lord George, 'is never a part of our debates.'

Under these circumstances, Lord George took occasion to review the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel, on the 20th July, in the House of Commons, only three days before the prorogation, and in one of his most successful speeches. He was much assisted by the fact that the exports of all our staple manufactures had then greatly diminished, and of course he urged this point triumphantly. 'If we had been indemnified for the dead loss of £650,000 on cotton wool by any great impulse given to our manufacturers, it would be a consolation which unfortunately we could not enjoy.' He traced all the consumption to railway enterprise, and showed that it alone had compensated for the fruitless loss of revenue which we had incurred in vainly stimulating the exports of our manufactures, which had actually diminished. He was so impressed with the importance that, 'on the eve of a dissolution, such a statement as that of Sir Robert Peel should not go forth to the country uncontroverted, as in that case the necessary result would be that the people would come to the opinion that they might abolish taxes altogether and yet maintain the revenue,' that he sat up all night writing an address to his constituents, the electors of King's Lynn, which took up nearly two columns of the newspapers, in which he presented his refutation to the public of the commercial manifesto of Tamworth, illustrated by the necessary tables and documents.

There is a sentence in this speech which, as a distinct expression of policy, should perhaps be quoted:

'Sir, I am one of those who seek for the repeal of the malt tax and the hop duties. I am one of those

who think that the excise duties ought to be taken off. But, sir, I do not pretend that you can repeal the malt tax or the hop duties, or remove the soap tax without commutation for other taxes. I will not delude the people by pretending that I could take off more than seven millions and a half of taxes without replacing them by others, and not leave the nation bankrupt. But I think these reforms of Sir Robert Peel have been in a mistaken direction; I think that revenue duties on all foreign imports ought to be maintained, and that a revenue equal to those excise duties which I have mentioned can be levied upon the produce of foreign countries and foreign industry, without imposing any greater tax than one which shall fall far short of Mr. Walker's "perfect revenue standard of 20 per cent." I say that by imposing a tax far less than 20 per cent. upon all articles of foreign import, a revenue might be derived far less burdensome to this country than that of excise, a revenue of which the burden would be largely shared in by foreign countries, and in many cases paid altogether by foreign countries.'

Lord George at this time watched with great interest a novel feature in our commercial transactions. He wrote on the 29th May (1847), to Mr. Burn, the editor of the 'Commercial Glance,' and an individual of whose intelligence, accuracy, and zeal he had a high and just opinion, 'Can you inform me how the raw cotton purchased for exportation stands in the first three weeks of the present month of May, as compared with the corresponding periods of '46–5–4–3?

'I observe from a cotton circular sent to me the other day, that seven thousand five hundred bags of

cotton had been purchased for exportation between the 1st and 21st of May. If with reduced stocks of raw cotton we are commencing a career of increased exportation, it appears to me to involve very serious consequences for our cotton manufactures as growing out of the existing monetary difficulties of the manufacturers.

'If you could answer me these queries within the next three or four days, I should feel greatly obliged to you.'

Again, on the 22d of July, on the point of going down to his constituents, he was still pursuing his inquiries in the same quarter. 'I want particularly to compare,' he says to Mr. Burn, 'the export of the last ten weeks of raw cotton with the corresponding ten weeks of '46 and '45, and at the same time to compare the importations and deliveries into the hands of the manufacturers during these same periods.

'Pray address me, Lynn, Norfolk, where I go on Saturday, and shall remain till after my election on Thursday.'

He writes again from Lynn, with great thanks for the information which had been accordingly forwarded to him there. 'Might I ask you to give me an account of the cotton wool imported weekly into Liverpool, and also the quantity sold to dealers, exporters, and speculators, in the three corresponding weeks of '45–46.

'This information by return of post would greatly oblige me.'

On the 23d of July, 1847, the last day of the second Parliament of Queen Victoria, Lord George went down to the House of Commons early, and took the opportunity of making a statement respecting the

condition of our sugar-producing colonies, which were now experiencing the consequences of the unjustifiable legislation of the preceding year. He said there were appearances in the political horizon which betokened that he should not be able to obtain a select committee in the present session, and therefore, if he had the honour of a seat in the next Parliament, he begged to announce that he would take the earliest occasion to move for a committee to inquire into the present power of our colonies to compete with those countries which have still the advantage of the enforced labour of slaves. The returns just laid upon the table of the House could leave no doubt, he thought, on any man's mind on that point. Since the emancipation, the produce of sugar by the colonies, from '31 to '46, had been reduced one half, and of rum and coffee had been reduced to one fourth. When the act of last year which admitted slave-grown sugar was introduced, the allegation of the English colonies, that they could not compete with the labour of slaves, was denied. The proof of that allegation was, that they were already overwhelmed.

When one recalls all to which this speech led, the most memorable effort of that ardent, energetic life to which it was perhaps fatal, one can scarcely observe the origin of such vast exertions without emotion.

The Under Secretary of State replied to Lord George, making a cry of cheap sugar for the hustings which were before everybody's eyes, but making also this remarkable declaration, that 'the Island of Mauritius was in a state of the greatest prosperity.' While Lord George was speaking, the cannon were heard that announced the departure of her majesty from the palace.

Then followed a motion of Mr. Bankes about the sale of bread, which led to some discussion. Mr. Bankes threatened a division. Lord Palmerston, who on this occasion was leading the House, said it would be acting like a set of schoolboys, if when Black Rod appeared they should be in the lobby instead of attending the Speaker to the other House. But as the members seemed very much inclined to act like schoolboys, the Secretary of State had to speak against time on the subject of baking. He analyzed the petition, which he said he would not read through, but the last paragraph was of great importance.

At these words, Black Rod knocked at the door, and duly making his appearance, summoned the House to attend the Queen in the House of Lords, and Mr. Speaker, followed by a crowd of members, duly obeyed the summons.

In about a quarter of an hour, Mr. Speaker returned without the mace, and standing at the table read her Majesty's speech to the members around, after which they retired, the Parliament being prorogued. In the course of the afternoon, the Parliament was dissolved by proclamation.

CHAPTER IX.

The Great Panic.

HE general election of 1847 did not materially alter the position of parties in the House of Commons. The high prices of agricultural produce which then prevailed naturally rendered the agricultural interest apathetic, and although the rural constituencies, from a feeling of esteem, again returned those members who had been faithful to the protective principle, the farmers did not exert themselves to increase the number of their supporters. The necessity of doing so was earnestly impressed upon them by Lord George Bentinck, who warned them then that the pinching hour was inevitable; but the caution was disregarded, and many of those individuals who are now the loudest in their imprecations on the memory of Sir Robert Peel, and who are the least content with the temperate course which is now recommended to them by those who have the extremely difficult office of upholding their interests in the House of Commons, entirely kept aloof, or would smile when they were asked for their support with sarcastic self-complacency, saying, 'Well, Sir, do

you think after all that free trade has done us so much harm?' Perhaps they think now, that if they had taken the advice of Lord George Bentinck and exerted themselves to return a majority to the House of Commons, it would have profited them more than useless execrations and barren discontent. But it is observable, that no individuals now grumble so much as the farmers who voted for free trader in 1847, unless indeed it be the shipowners, every one of whom for years, both in and out of Parliament, supported the repeal of the corn laws.

The Protectionists maintained their numbers, though they did not increase them, in the new Parliament. Lord George Bentinck however gained an invaluable coadjutor by the re-appearance of Mr. Herries in public life, a gentleman whose official as well as parliamentary experience, fine judgment, and fertile resource, have been of inestimable service to the Protectionist party. The political connection which gained most were the Whigs; they were much more numerous and compact, but it was in a great measure at the expense of the general liberal element, and partly at the cost of the following of Sir Robert Peel. The triumphant Conservative majority of 1841 had disappeared; but the government, with all shades of supporters, had not an absolute majority.

Had the general election been postponed until the autumn, the results might have been very different. That storm — which had been long gathering in the commercial atmosphere — then burst like a typhoon. The annals of our trade afford no parallel for the widespread disaster and the terrible calamities. In the month of September, fifteen of the most considerable houses in the city of London stopped payment for

between five and six millions sterling. The governor of the Bank of England was himself a partner in one of these firms; a gentleman who had lately filled that office, was another victim; two other Bank directors were included in the list. The failures were not limited to the metropolis, but were accompanied by others of great extent in the provinces. At Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow large firms were obliged to suspend payments. This shock of credit arrested all the usual accommodation, and the pressure in the money-market, so terrible in the spring, was revived. The excitement and the alarm in the city of London were so great that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer hurried up to town on the 1st of October, he found that the interest of money was at the rate of 60 per cent. per annum. The Bank Charter produced the same injurious effect as it had done in April; it aggravated the evil by forcing men to hoard. In vain the commercial world deplored the refusal of the government to comply with the suggestion made by Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Thomas Baring in the spring; in vain they entreated them at least now to adopt it, and to authorize the Bank of England to enlarge the amount of their discounts and advances on approved security, without reference to the stringent clause of the charter. The government, acting, it is believed, with the encouragement and sanction of Sir Robert Peel, were obstinate, and three weeks then occurred during which the commercial credit of this country was threatened with total destruction. Nine more considerable mercantile houses stopped payment in the metropolis, the disasters in the provinces were still more extensive. The Royal Bank of Liverpool failed; among several principal establishments in that

town, one alone stopped payment for upwards of a million sterling. The havoc at Manchester was also great. The Newcastle bank and the North and South Wales bank stopped. Consols fell to 79¼, and exchequer bills were at last at 35 per cent. discount. The ordinary rate of discount at the Bank of England was between 8 and 9 per cent., but out of doors accommodation was not to be obtained. In such a state of affairs, the small houses of course gave way. From their rising in the morning until their hour of retirement at night, the First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were employed in seeing persons of all descriptions, who entreated them to interfere and preserve the community from universal bankruptcy. 'Perish the world, sooner than violate a principle,' was the philosophical exclamation of her Majesty's ministers, sustained by the sympathy and the sanction of Sir Robert Peel. At last, the governor and the deputy-governor of the Bank of England waited on Downing Street, and said it could go on no more. The Scotch banks had applied to them for assistance. The whole demand for discount was thrown upon the Bank of England. Two bill-brokers had stopped; two others were paralyzed. The Bank of England could discount no longer. Thanks to the Bank Charter, they were safe and their treasury full of bullion, but it appeared that everybody else must fall, for in four-and-twenty hours the machinery of credit would be entirely stopped. The position was frightful, and the government gave way. They did that on the 25th of October, after houses had fallen to the amount of fifteen millions sterling, which they had been counselled to do by Lord George Bentinck on the 25th of April. It turned out

exactly as Mr. Thomas Baring had foretold. It was not want of capital or deficiency of circulation which had occasioned these awful consequences. It was sheer panic, occasioned by an unwisely stringent law. No sooner had the government freed the Bank of England from that stringency, than the panic ceased. The very morning the letter of license from the government to the Bank of England appeared, thousands and tens of thousands of pounds sterling were taken from the hoards, some from boxes deposited with bankers, although the depositors would not leave the notes in their bankers' hands. Large parcels of notes were returned to the Bank of England cut into halves, as they had been sent down into the country, and so small was the real demand for an additional quantity of currency, that the whole amount taken from the Bank, when the unlimited power of issue was given, was under £400,000, and the Bank consequently never availed itself of the privilege which the government had accorded it. The restoration of confidence produced an ample currency, and that confidence had solely been withdrawn from the apprehension of the stringent clauses of the Bank Charter Act of 1844.

These extraordinary events had not occurred unnoticed by Lord George Bentinck. The two subjects that mostly engaged his attention after the general election were the action of the Bank Charter and the state of our sugar colonies. Perhaps it would be best to give some extracts from his correspondence at this period. He was a good letter-writer, easy and clear. His characteristic love of details also rendered this style of communication interesting. It is not possible to give more than extracts, and it is necessary to omit all those circumstances which generally in letter-

reading are most acceptable. His comments on men and things were naturally free and full, and he always endeavoured, for the amusement of his correspondents, to communicate the social gossip of the hour. But although all this must necessarily be omitted, his letters may afford some illustrations of his earnestness and energy, the constancy of his aim, and the untiring vigilance with which he pursued his object—especially those which are addressed to gentlemen engaged in commercial pursuits who coöperated with him in his investigations.

TO A FRIEND.

HARCOURT HOUSE, *August* 30, 1847.

An answer is come out to my address to my constituents at King's Lynn, and to my speech in answer to Peel's manifesto. Pray read it. At first I thought I could swear to its being * * * *, I now think I can swear to its being * * * *; the servility to Peel, and the official red-tape style would equally do for either; but the no-popery page, I think, fixes it on * * * *.

I think it wretchedly weak, and have written some notes on the margin, showing up the principal points. The nine months' famine of 1846–47, as contrasted with Peel's famine, shows a difference of between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000; that is to say, on the balance in the nine months 1845–46, Ireland exported about three millions' worth of breadstuffs, and not a soul died of famine. In the nine months 1846–47, she imported three millions' sterling worth of breadstuffs, which insufficed to prevent one million—or say half a million—of the people from dying of starvation.

At present I have seen no notice of the pamphlet in any of the newspapers: if it is either * * * *'s, or * * * *'s, or * * * *'s, we shall see it reviewed in 'Times,' 'Chronicle,' and 'Spectator.'

The Bank of England has raised the interest on * * * *'s mortgage one-third per cent., making an additional annual charge of

£1,500 a year to him. I am very sorry for him, but I know nothing so likely to rouse the landed aristocracy from their apathy, and to weaken their idolatry of Peel so much as this warning note of the joint operation of his free trade and restrictive currency laws.

TO A FRIEND.

HARCOURT HOUSE, *September* 2, 1847.

I think it is * * * *. The trickster, I observe, has carefully reduced the pounds of cotton to cwts., in the hopes of concealing a great fraud to which he has condescended; taking, in the Whig year of 1841, the home consumption of cotton, whilst in Peel's year he gives entire importation as the home consumption, representing both as home consumption.

In Peel's year, 1846, officially we have only the gross importation; but in the Whig year, 1841, the entire importation and the home consumption are given separately: the importation exceeding the home consumption by fifty million pounds. Burn's 'Glance,' however, gives the importation and home consumption for both years; unfortunately, however, not in lbs. or cwts., but in bags. * * * *'s fraud, however, is not the less apparent.

He selects a Whig year when the home consumption was 220,000 bags under the importation, and a year for Peel when the importation exceeded the home consumption by 280,000 bags, and claps down the figures as alike describing the home consumption.

None of the Peel papers have taken up the subject: if they should, the 'Morning Post' will answer the pamphlet; but I should like to have mine back again, in order that I may furnish them with the notes.

* * * * was with me this morning, and called my attention to the circumstance that the author starts with 'We,' but drops into the singular number; * * * * fancies it is Peel himself, but the page on endowment fixes it on * * * *.

Lord L * * * * means, I presume, that Peel's savage hatred is applied to the Protectionist portion of his old party, not of course to the janissaries and renegade portion.

The following letter was in reply to one of a friend who had sent him information, several days before they occurred, of the great failures that were about to happen in the city of London. The list was unfortunately quite accurate, with the exception indeed of the particular house respecting which Lord George quotes the opinion of Baron Rothschild.

TO A FRIEND.

WELBECK, *September* 17, 1847.

A thousand thanks for your letter, the intelligence in which created a great sensation at Doncaster.

As yet none of the houses appear to have failed except S * * * *. Baron Rothschild was at Doncaster. I talked with him on the subject; he seemed not to doubt the probable failure of any of the houses you named, except * * * *. He declared very emphatically 'that * * * * house was as sound as any house in London.'

Lord Fitzwilliam declares 'it is no free trade without free trade in money.'

Lord Clanricarde is here—laughs at the idea of Parliament meeting in October; but talks much of the difficulties of Ireland—says he does not see how the rates are to be paid.

Messrs. Drummond are calling in their mortgages. I expect to hear that this practice will be general; money dear, corn cheap, incumbrances enhanced, and rents depressed. What will become of the apathetic country gentlemen? I judge from * * * *'s language, that Lord John Russell will stand or fall by the Bank Charter Act; but that he feels very apprehensive of being unable to maintain it.

I agree with Bonham, in thinking that the Protectionist party is smashed for the present Parliament; but I must say, I think Protectionist principles and policy are likely to come into repute again far sooner than was expected; and though Peel's party be a compact body, and formidable in the House of Commons, I cannot think that there appears that in the working of his measures to make it likely that

he should be soon again carried into power on the shoulders of the people. I think his political reputation must ebb further before it can rise again, if it should ever rise again. * * * * thought him 'broken and in low spirits,' when he met him at Longshaw; but Lord * * * *, who was there at the same time, came away more Peelite than ever, and told them at Bretby that Sir Robert said, 'That he was quite surprised at the number of letters he got every day from members returned to Parliament, saying they meant to vote with him.'

You may rely upon it the Peelites are very sanguine that they will be in power again almost directly. We must keep them out.

TO MR. BURN, EDITOR OF THE 'COMMERCIAL GLANCE.'

WELBECK, *September* 28, 1847.

To the many courtesies you have already bestowed upon me, I will sincerely thank you to add that of informing me what have been the estimated cotton crops in the United States in each of the last four years. I would also thank you to inform me the comparative importation, home consumption, re-exportation, and stocks on hand of cotton of the first seven months of the current and three preceding years.

TO MR. BURN.

WELBECK, *October* 4, 1847.

Your statistics have reached me in the very nick of time, and are invaluable. I care nothing about 'outsides,' it is 'insides' I look to; give me a good 'heart,' and I don't care how rough the '*bark*' is.

Anything so good I fear to spoil by suggesting the most trivial addition, else I should say it would be an interesting feature to classify the exports of cotton goods, etc., etc., under three heads:—

1st. To the British colonies and British possessions abroad.

2nd. To the northern states of Europe, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, etc., etc., the United States of America, and other countries having high tariffs.

3rd. To China, Turkey, Africa, and the Southern States of America, and countries with low tariffs.

I fear these failures of East and West India houses must entail great distress upon Manchester, and the manufacturing interests generally. You have given an account of the bankruptcies in the cotton trade during a long series of years till last year inclusive; are you able to say how the first nine months of the current year stands in comparison with its predecessors?

I so highly prize your new work, that I must ask for a dozen copies to distribute among my friends.

P. S. I have already parted with the copy you sent me; may I, therefore, beg another without waiting for any other binding?

TO A FRIEND.

WELBECK, *October* 5, 1847.

I shall go up to town on Friday evening, in my way to Newmarket, and shall be at Harcourt House all Saturday and Sunday, and shall be delighted to see you, and have a thorough good talk with you. Free trade seems working mischief faster than the most fearful of us predicted, and Manchester houses, as I am told, 'failing in rows,' ashamed to do penance in public, are secretly weeping in sackcloth and ashes, and heartily praying that Peel and Cobden had been hanged before they were allowed to ruin the country.

Money at Manchester is quoted one and a quarter per cent. for ten days: £45 12*s*. 6*d*. per cent. per annum!

TO A FRIEND.

HARCOURT HOUSE, *October* 22, 1847.

I have this moment got a note from Stuart, telling me that 'the Chancellor has this afternoon sent out his notice of the business

to be taken in his own court during Michaelmas term, that is, from the 2nd of November till the 26th, and *below it* THERE IS THIS NOTICE *—except those days on which the Lord Chancellor may sit in the House of Lords! ! !*'

Surely this must portend a November session.

TO A FRIEND.

HARCOURT HOUSE, *October* 23, 1847.

The fat banker's gossip is all stuff. Peel goes to Windsor to-day, I believe on an invitation of some standing. * * * * who had been dining at Palmerston's last night, tells me that he does not think that ministers mean calling Parliament together, and is confident they mean to maintain the Bank Charter Act. There have been some first-rate articles and letters in the 'Morning Chronicle' lately on this subject.

TO A FRIEND.

HARCOURT HOUSE, *November* 6, 1847.

I will stay over Tuesday, that I may have the pleasure of a thorough talk with you.

I am told things are gradually getting better. I expect, however, a fresh reverse about six weeks or two months hence, when the returned lists of the stoppages in the East and West Indies, consequent upon the late failures here, come home. The Western Bank of Scotland is whispered about. If that were to fail, it might bring the canny Scots to their senses; but they are a headstrong race.

A committee on commercial distress having been appointed, the principal reason for the summoning of the new Parliament in the autumn had been satisfied,

and an adjournment until a month after Christmas was in prospect. Before, however, this took place, a new and interesting question arose, which led to considerable discussion, and which ultimately influenced in no immaterial manner the parliamentary position of Lord George Bentinck.

The city of London at the general election had sent to the House of Commons, as a colleague of the first minister, a member who found a difficulty in taking one of the oaths appointed by the House to be sworn preliminarily to any member exercising his right of voting. The difficulty arose from this member being not only of the Jewish race, but unfortunately believing only in the first part of the Jewish religion.

CHAPTER X.

The Jews.

HE relations that subsist between the Bedoueen race that, under the name of Jews, is found in every country of Europe, and the Teutonic, Sclavonian, and Celtic races which have appropriated that division of the globe, will form hereafter one of the most remarkable chapters in a philosophical history of man.

The Saxon, the Sclav, and the Celt have adopted most of the laws and many of the customs of these Arabian tribes, all their literature and all their religion. They are therefore indebted to them for much that regulates, much that charms, and much that solaces existence. The toiling multitude rest every seventh day by virtue of a Jewish law; they are perpetually reading, 'for their example,' the records of Jewish history, and singing the odes and elegies of Jewish poets; and they daily acknowledge on their knees, with reverent gratitude, that the only medium of communication between the Creator and themselves is the Jewish race. Yet they treat that race as the vilest of generations; and instead of logically looking

upon them as the human family that has contributed most to human happiness, they extend to them every term of obloquy and every form of persecution.

Let us endeavour to penetrate this social anomaly that has harassed and perplexed centuries.

It is alleged that the dispersion of the Jewish race is a penalty incurred for the commission of a great crime: namely, the crucifixion of our blessed Lord in the form of a Jewish prince, by the Romans, at Jerusalem, and at the instigation of some Jews, in the reign of Tiberius Augustus Cæsar. Upon this, it may be observed, that the allegation is neither historically true nor dogmatically sound.

1. *Not historically true.* It is not historically true, because at the time of the advent of our Lord, the Jewish race was as much dispersed throughout the world as at this present time, and had been so for many centuries. Europe, with the exception of those shores which are bathed by the midland sea, was then a primeval forest, but in every city of the great Eastern monarchies and in every province of the Roman empire, the Jews had been long settled. We have not precise authority for saying that at the advent there were more Jews established in Egypt than in Palestine, but it may unquestionably be asserted that at that period there were more Jews living, and that too in great prosperity and honour, at Alexandria than at Jerusalem. It is evident from various Roman authors, that the Jewish race formed no inconsiderable portion of the multitude that filled Rome itself, and that the Mosaic religion, undisturbed by the state, even made proselytes. But it is unnecessary to enter into any curious researches on this head, though the authorities are neither scant nor

uninteresting. We are furnished with evidence the most complete and unanswerable of the pre-dispersion by the sacred writings themselves. Not two months after the crucifixion, when the Third Person of the Holy Trinity first descended on Jerusalem, it being the time of the great festivals, when the Jews, according to the custom of the Arabian tribes pursued to this day in the pilgrimage to Mecca, repaired from all quarters to the central sacred place, the holy writings inform us that there were gathered together in Jerusalem 'Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.' And that this expression, so general but so precise, should not be mistaken, we are shortly afterwards, though incidentally, informed, that there were Parthians, Medes, and Persians at Jerusalem, professing the Mosaic faith; Jews from Mesopotamia and Syria, from the countries of the lesser and the greater Asia; Egyptian, Libyan, Greek, and Arabian Jews; and, especially, Jews from Rome itself, some of which latter are particularly mentioned as Roman proselytes.

Nor is it indeed historically true that the small section of the Jewish race which dwelt in Palestine rejected Christ. The reverse is the truth. Had it not been for the Jews of Palestine, the good tidings of our Lord would have been unknown for ever to the northern and western races. The first preachers of the gospel were Jews, and none else; the historians of the gospel were Jews, and none else. No one has ever been permitted to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, except a Jew. For nearly a century no one believed in the good tidings except Jews. They nursed the sacred flame of which they were the consecrated and hereditary depositaries. And when the time was ripe to diffuse the truth among the

ethnics, it was not a senator of Rome or a philosopher of Athens who was personally appointed by our Lord for that office, but a Jew of Tarsus, who founded the seven churches of Asia. And that greater church, great even amid its terrible corruptions, that has avenged the victory of Titus by subjugating the capital of the Cæsars, and has changed every one of the Olympian temples into altars of the God of Sinai and of Calvary, was founded by another Jew, a Jew of Galilee.

From all which it appears that the dispersion of the Jewish race, preceding as it did for countless ages the advent of our Lord, could not be for conduct which occurred subsequently to the advent, and that they are also guiltless of that subsequent conduct which has been imputed to them as a crime, since for Him and His blessed name, they preached, and wrote, and shed their blood 'as witnesses.'

But, is it possible that that which is not historically true can be dogmatically sound? Such a conclusion would impugn the foundations of all faith. The followers of Jesus, of whatever race, need not however be alarmed. The belief that the present condition of the Jewish race is a penal infliction for the part which some Jews took at the crucifixion is not dogmatically sound.

2. *Not dogmatically sound.* There is no passage in the sacred writings that in the slightest degree warrants the penal assumption. The imprecation of the mob at the crucifixion is sometimes strangely quoted as a divine decree. It is not a principle of jurisprudence, human or inspired, to permit the criminal to ordain his own punishment. Why, too, should they transfer any portion of the infliction to their

posterity? What evidence have we that the wild suggestion was sanctioned by Omnipotence? On the contrary, amid the expiating agony, a Divine Voice at the same time solicited and secured forgiveness. And if unforgiven, could the cry of a rabble at such a scene bind a nation?

But, dogmatically considered, the subject of the crucifixion must be viewed in a deeper spirit. We must pause with awe to remember what was the principal office to be fulfilled by the advent. When the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation was consummated, a Divine Person moved on the face of the earth in the shape of a child of Israel, not to teach but to expiate. True it is that no word could fall from such lips, whether in the form of profound parable, or witty retort, or preceptive lore, but to guide and enlighten; but they who, in those somewhat lax effusions which in these days are honoured with the holy name of theology, speak of the morality of the Gospel as a thing apart and of novel revelation, would do well to remember that in promulgating such doctrines they are treading on very perilous ground. There cannot be two moralities; and to hold that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity could teach a different morality from that which had been already revealed by the First Person of the Holy Trinity, is a dogma so full of terror that it may perhaps be looked upon as the ineffable sin against the Holy Spirit. When the lawyer tempted our Lord, and inquired how he was to inherit eternal life, the great Master of Galilee referred him to the writings of Moses. There he would find recorded 'the whole duty of man;' to love God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and his neighbour as himself. These two

principles are embalmed in the writings of Moses, and are the essence of Christian morals.*

It was for something deeper than this, higher and holier than even Moses could fulfil, that angels announced the Coming. It was to accomplish an event pre-ordained by the Creator of the world for countless ages. Born from the chosen house of the chosen people, yet blending in his inexplicable nature the Divine essence with the human elements, a sacrificial Mediator was to appear, appointed before all time, to purify with his atoning blood the myriads that had preceded and the myriads that will follow him. The doctrine embraces all space and time—nay, chaos and eternity; Divine persons are the agents, and the redemption of the whole family of man the result. If the Jews had not prevailed upon the Romans to crucify our Lord, what would have become of the Atonement? But the human mind cannot contemplate the idea that the most important deed of time could depend upon human will. The immolators were preordained like the victim, and the holy race supplied both. Could that be a crime which secured for all mankind eternal joy—which vanquished Satan, and opened the gates of Paradise? Such a tenet would sully and impugn the doctrine that is the corner-stone of our faith and hope. Men must not presume to sit in judgment on such an act. They must bow their heads in awe and astonishment and trembling gratitude.

But, though the opinion that the dispersion of the Jewish race must be deemed a penalty incurred for

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* 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.' —Leviticus xix. 18.

their connection with the crucifixion has neither historical nor doctrinal sanction, it is possible that its degrading influence upon its victims may have been as efficacious as if their present condition were indeed a judicial infliction. Persecution, in a word, although unjust, may have reduced the modern Jews to a state almost justifying malignant vengeance. They may have become so odious and so hostile to mankind, as to merit for their present conduct, no matter how occasioned, the obloquy and ill-treatment of the communities in which they dwell and with which they are scarcely permitted to mingle.

Let us examine this branch of the subject, which, though of more limited interest, is not without instruction.

In all the great cities of Europe, and in some of the great cities of Asia, among the infamous classes therein existing, there will always be found Jews. They are not the only people who are usurers, gladiators, and followers of mean and scandalous occupations, nor are they anywhere a majority of such, but considering their general numbers, they contribute perhaps more than their proportion to the aggregate of the vile. In this they obey the law which regulates the destiny of all persecuted races: the infamous is the business of the dishonoured; and as infamous pursuits are generally illegal pursuits, the persecuted race which has most ability will be most successful in combating the law. The Jews have never been so degraded as the Greeks were throughout the Levant before the emancipation, and the degradation of the Greeks was produced by a period of persecution which, both in amount and suffering, cannot compare with that which has been endured by the children of

Israel. This peculiarity, however, attends the Jews under the most unfavourable circumstances; the other degraded races wear out and disappear; the Jew remains, as determined, as expert, as persevering, as full of resource and resolution as ever. Viewed in this light, the degradation of the Jewish race is alone a striking evidence of its excellence, for none but one of the great races could have survived the trials which it has endured.

But, though a material organization of the highest class may account for so strange a consequence, the persecuted Hebrew is supported by other means. He is sustained by a sublime religion. Obdurate, malignant, odious, and revolting as the lowest Jew appears to us, he is rarely demoralized. Beneath his own roof his heart opens to the influence of his beautiful Arabian traditions. All his ceremonies, his customs, and his festivals are still to celebrate the bounty of nature and the favour of Jehovah. The patriarchal feeling lingers about his hearth. A man, however fallen, who loves his home is not wholly lost. The trumpet of Sinai still sounds in the Hebrew ear, and a Jew is never seen upon the scaffold, unless it be at an *auto da fè*.

But, having made this full admission of the partial degradation of the Jewish race, we are not prepared to agree that this limited degeneracy is any justification of the prejudices and persecution which originated in barbarous or mediæval superstitions. On the contrary, viewing the influence of the Jewish race upon the modern communities, without any reference to the past history or the future promises of Israel; dismissing from our minds and memories, if indeed that be possible, all that the Hebrews have done in the olden

time for man and all which it may be their destiny yet to fulfil, we hold that instead of being an object of aversion, they should receive all that honour and favour from the northern and western races, which, in civilized and refined nations, should be the lot of those who charm the public taste and elevate the public feeling. We hesitate not to say that there is no race at this present, and following in this only the example of a long period, that so much delights, and fascinates, and elevates, and ennobles Europe, as the Jewish.

We dwell not on the fact, that the most admirable artists of the drama have been and still are of the Hebrew race: or, that the most entrancing singers, graceful dancers, and exquisite musicians, are sons and daughters of Israel: though this were much. But these brilliant accessories are forgotten in the sublimer claim.

It seems that the only means by which in these modern times we are permitted to develop the beautiful is music. It would appear definitively settled that excellence in the plastic arts is the privilege of the earlier ages of the world. All that is now produced in this respect is mimetic, and, at the best, the skilful adaptation of traditional methods. The creative faculty of modern man seems by an irresistible law at work on the virgin soil of science, daily increasing by its inventions our command over nature, and multiplying the material happiness of man. But the happiness of man is not merely material. Were it not for music, we might in these days say, the beautiful is dead. Music seems to be the only means of creating the beautiful, in which we not only equal, but in all probability greatly excel, the ancients. The music of modern Europe ranks with the transcendent cre-

ations of human genius; the poetry, the statues, the temples, of Greece. It produces and represents as they did whatever is most beautiful in the spirit of man and often expresses what is most profound. And who are the great composers, who hereafter will rank with Homer, with Sophocles, with Praxiteles, or with Phidias? They are the descendants of those Arabian tribes who conquered Canaan, and who by favour of the Most High have done more with less means even than the Athenians.

Forty years ago—not a longer period than the children of Israel were wandering in the desert—the two most dishonoured races in Europe were the Attic and the Hebrew, and they were the two races that had done most for mankind. Their fortunes had some similarity: their countries were the two smallest in the world, equally barren and equally famous; they both divided themselves into tribes: both built a most famous temple on an acropolis; and both produced a literature which all European nations have accepted with reverence and admiration. Athens has been sacked oftener than Jerusalem, and oftener razed to the ground; but the Athenians have escaped expatriation, which is purely an Oriental custom. The sufferings of the Jews, however, have been infinitely more prolonged and varied than those of the Athenians. The Greek nevertheless appears exhausted. The creative genius of Israel, on the contrary, never shone so bright; and when the Russian, the Frenchman, and the Anglo-Saxon, amid applauding theatres or the choral voices of solemn temples, yield themselves to the full spell of a Mozart or a Mendelssohn, it seems difficult to comprehend how these races can reconcile it to their hearts to persecute a Jew.

We have shown that the theological prejudice against the Jews has no foundation, historical or doctrinal; we have shown that the social prejudice, originating in the theological but sustained by superficial observations, irrespective of religious prejudice, is still more unjust, and that no existing race is so much entitled to the esteem and gratitude of society as the Hebrew. It remains for us to notice the injurious consequences to European society of the course pursued by the communities to this race; and this view of the subject leads us to considerations which it would become existing statesmen to ponder.

The world has by this time discovered that it is impossible to destroy the Jews. The attempt to extirpate them has been made under the most favourable auspices and on the largest scale; the most considerable means that man could command have been pertinaciously applied to this object for the longest period of recorded time. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic princes, and holy inquisitors have alike devoted their energies to the fulfilment of this common purpose. Expatriation, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious, and massacre on the most extensive, scale, with a curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws which would have broken the heart of any other people, have been tried, and in vain. The Jews, after all this havoc, are probably more numerous at this date than they were during the reign of Solomon the Wise, are found in all lands, and, unfortunately, prospering in most. All of which proves that it is in vain for man to attempt to battle the inexorable law of nature, which has decreed that

a superior race shall never be destroyed or absorbed by an inferior.

But the influence of a great race will be felt; its greatness does not depend upon its numbers, otherwise the English would not have vanquished the Chinese, nor would the Aztecs have been overthrown by Cortez and a handful of Goths. That greatness results from its organization, the consequences of which are shown in its energy and enterprise, in the strength of its will and the fertility of its brain. Let us observe what should be the influence of the Jews, and then ascertain how it is exercised. The Jewish race connects the modern populations with the early ages of the world, when the relations of the Creator with the created were more intimate than in these days, when angels visited the earth, and God himself even spoke with man. The Jews represent the Semitic principle; all that is spiritual in our nature. They are the trustees of tradition and the conservators of the religious element. They are a living and the most striking evidence of the falsity of that pernicious doctrine of modern times—the natural equality of man. The political equality of a particular race is a matter of municipal arrangement, and depends entirely on political considerations and circumstances; but the natural equality of man now in vogue, and taking the form of cosmopolitan fraternity, is a principle which, were it possible to act on it, would deteriorate the great races and destroy all the genius of the world. What would be the consequence on the great Anglo-Saxon republic, for example, were its citizens to secede from their sound principle of reserve, and mingle with their negro and coloured

populations? In the course of time they would become so deteriorated that their states would probably be reconquered and regained by the aborigines whom they have expelled, and who would then be their superiors. But though nature will never ultimately permit this theory of natural equality to be practised, the preaching of this dogma has already caused much mischief, and may occasion much more. The native tendency of the Jewish race, who are justly proud of their blood, is against the doctrine of the equality of man. They have also another characteristic, the faculty of acquisition. Although the European laws have endeavoured to prevent their obtaining property, they have nevertheless become remarkable for their accumulated wealth. Thus it will be seen that all the tendencies of the Jewish race are conservative. Their bias is to religion, property, and natural aristocracy: and it should be the interest of statesmen that this bias of a great race should be encouraged, and their energies and creative powers enlisted in the cause of existing society.

But existing society has chosen to persecute this race which should furnish its choice allies, and what have been the consequences?

They may be traced in the last outbreak of the destructive principle in Europe. An insurrection takes place against tradition and aristocracy, against religion and property. Destruction of the Semitic principle, extirpation of the Jewish religion, whether in the Mosaic or in the Christian form, the natural equality of man, and the abrogation of property, are proclaimed by the secret societies who form provisional governments, and men of Jewish race are found at the head of every one of them. The people of God coöperate

with atheists; the most skilful accumulators of property ally themselves with communists; the peculiar and chosen race touch the hand of all the scum and low castes of Europe! And all this because they wish to destroy that ungrateful Christendom which owes to them even its name, and whose tyranny they can no longer endure.

When the secret societies, in February, 1848, surprised Europe, they were themselves surprised by the unexpected opportunity, and so little capable were they of seizing the occasion, that had it not been for the Jews, who of late years unfortunately have been connecting themselves with these unhallowed associations, imbecile as were the governments, the uncalled-for outbreak would not have ravaged Europe. But the fiery energy and the teeming resources of the children of Israel maintained for a long time the unnecessary and useless struggle. If the reader throw his eye over the provisional governments of Germany and Italy, and even of France, formed at that period, he will recognize everywhere the Jewish element. Even the insurrection, and defence, and administration of Venice, which, from the resource and statesmanlike moderation displayed, commanded almost the respect and sympathy of Europe, were accomplished by a Jew —Manini—who, by the bye, is a Jew who professes the whole of the Jewish religion, and believes in Calvary as well as Sinai,—'a converted Jew,' as the Lombards styled him, quite forgetting, in the confusion of their ideas, that it is the Lombards who are the converts —not Manini.

Thus it will be seen, that the persecution of the Jewish race has deprived European society of an important conservative element, and added to the de-

structive party an influential ally. Prince Metternich, the most enlightened of modern statesmen, not to say the most intellectual of men, was, though himself a victim of the secret societies, fully aware of these premises. It was always his custom, great as were the difficulties which in so doing he had to encounter, to employ as much as possible the Hebrew race in the public service. He could never forget that Napoleon, in his noontide hour, had been checked by the pen of the greatest of political writers; he had found that illustrious author as great in the cabinet as in the study; he knew that no one had more contributed to the deliverance of Europe. It was not as a patron, but as an appreciating and devoted friend, that the High Chancellor of Austria appointed Frederick Gentz secretary to the Congress of Vienna—and Frederick Gentz was a child of Israel.

It is no doubt to be deplored that several millions of the Jewish race should persist in believing in only a part of their religion; but this is a circumstance which does not affect Europe, and time, with different treatment, may remove the anomaly which perhaps may be accounted for. It should be recollected, that the existing Jews are perhaps altogether the descendants of those various colonies and emigrations which, voluntary or forced, long preceded the advent. Between the vast carnage of the Roman wars, from Titus to Hadrian, and the profession of Christ by his countrymen, which must have been very prevalent, since the Christian religion was solely sustained by the Jews of Palestine during the greater part of its first century, it is improbable that any descendants of the Jews of Palestine exist who disbelieve in Christ. After the fall of Jerusalem and the failure of Barcho-

chebas, no doubt some portion of the Jews found refuge in the desert, returning to their original land after such long and strange vicissitudes. This natural movement would account for those Arabian tribes, of whose resistance to Mohammed we have ample and authentic details, and who, if we are to credit the accounts which perplex modern travellers, are to this day governed by the Pentateuch instead of the Koran.

When Christianity was presented to the ancestors of the present Jews, it came from a very suspicious quarter, and was offered in a very questionable shape. Centuries must have passed in many instances before the Jewish colonies heard of the advent, the crucifixion, and the atonement; the latter, however, a doctrine in perfect harmony with Jewish ideas. When they first heard of Christianity, it appeared to be a Gentile religion, accompanied by idolatrous practices, from which severe monotheists, like the Arabians, always recoil, and holding the Jewish race up to public scorn and hatred. This is not the way to make converts.

There have been two great colonies of the Jewish race in Europe; in Spain and in Sarmatia. The origin of the Jews in Spain is lost in the night of time. That it was of great antiquity we have proof. The tradition, once derided, that the Iberian Jews were a Phœnician colony has been favoured by the researches of modern antiquaries, who have traced the Hebrew language in the ancient names of the localities. It may be observed, however, that the languages of the Jews and the Philistines, or Phœnicians, were probably too similar to sanction any positive induction from such phenomena; while on the other hand, in reply to those who have urged the improbability of the

Jews, who had no seaports, colonizing Spain, it may be remarked that the colony may have been an expatriation by the Philistines in the course of the long struggle which occurred between them and the invading tribes previous to the foundation of the Hebrew monarchy. We know that in the time of Cicero the Jews had been settled immemorially in Spain. When the Romans, converted to Christianity and acted on by the priesthood, began to trouble the Spanish Jews, it appears by a decree of Constantine that they were owners and cultivators of the soil, a circumstance which alone proves the antiquity and the nobility of their settlement, for the possession of the land is never conceded to a degraded race. The conquest of Spain by the Goths in the fifth and sixth centuries threatened the Spanish Jews, however, with more serious adversaries than the Romans. The Gothic tribes, very recently converted to their Syrian faith, were full of barbaric zeal against those whom they looked upon as the enemies of Jesus. But the Spanish Jews sought assistance from their kinsmen the Saracens on the opposite coast; Spain was invaded and subdued by the Moors, and for several centuries the Jew and the Saracen lived under the same benignant laws and shared the same brilliant prosperity. In the history of Spain during the Saracenic supremacy any distinction of religion or race is no longer traced. And so it came to pass that when at the end of the fourteenth century, after the fell triumph of the Dominicans over the Albigenses, the holy inquisition was introduced into Spain, it was reported to Torquemada that two-thirds of the nobility of Arragon, that is to say of the proprietors of the land, were Jews.

All that these men knew of Christianity was, that it was a religion of fire and sword, and that one of its first duties was to avenge some mysterious and inexplicable crime which had been committed ages ago by some unheard of ancestors of theirs in an unknown land. The inquisitors addressed themselves to the Spanish Jews in the same abrupt and ferocious manner in which the monks saluted the Mexicans and the Peruvians. All those of the Spanish Jews, who did not conform after the fall of the Mohammedan kingdoms, were expatriated by the victorious Goths, and these refugees were the main source of the Italian Jews, and of the most respectable portion of the Jews of Holland. These exiles found refuge in two republics; Venice and the United Provinces. The Portuguese Jews, it is well known, came from Spain, and their ultimate expulsion from Portugal was attended by the same results as the Spanish expatriation.

The other great division of Jews in Europe are the Sarmatian Jews, and they are very numerous. They amount to nearly three millions. These unquestionably entered Europe with the other Sarmatian nations, descending the Borysthenes and ascending the Danube, and are according to all probability the progeny of the expatriations of the times of Tiglath-Pileser and Nebuchadnezzar. They are the posterity of those 'devout men,' Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, who were attending the festivals at Jerusalem at the time of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Living among barbarous pagans, who never molested them, these people went on very well, until suddenly the barbarous pagans, under the influence of an Italian priesthood, were converted to the Jewish religion, and then

as a necessary consequence the converts began to harass, persecute, and massacre the Jews.

These people had never heard of Christ. Had the Romans not destroyed Jerusalem, these Sarmatian Jews would have had a fair chance of obtaining from civilized beings some clear and coherent account of the great events which had occurred. They and their fathers before them would have gone up in customary pilgrimage to the central sacred place, both for purposes of devotion and purposes of trade, and they might have heard from Semitic lips that there were good tidings for Israel. What they heard from their savage companions, and the Italian priesthood which acted on them, was, that there were good tidings for all the world except Israel, and that Israel, for the commission of a great crime of which they had never heard and could not comprehend, was to be plundered, massacred, hewn to pieces, and burnt alive in the name of Christ and for the sake of Christianity.

The Eastern Jews, who are very numerous, are in general the descendants of those who in the course of repeated captivities settled in the great Eastern monarchies, and which they never quitted. They live in the same cities and follow the same customs as they did in the days of Cyrus. They are to be found in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor; at Bagdad, at Hamadan, at Smyrna. We know from the Jewish books how very scant was the following which accompanied Esdras and Nehemiah back to Jerusalem. A fortress city, built on a ravine, surrounded by stony mountains and watered by a scanty stream, had no temptations after the gardens of Babylon and the broad waters of the Euphrates. But Babylon has

vanished and Jerusalem remains, and what are the waters of Euphrates to the brook of Kedron! It is another name than that of Jesus of Nazareth with which these Jews have been placed in collision, and the Ishmaelites have not forgotten the wrongs of Hagar in their conduct to the descendants of Sarah.

Is it therefore wonderful that a great portion of the Jewish race should not believe in the most important portion of the Jewish religion? As, however, the converted races become more humane in their behaviour to the Jews, and the latter have opportunity fully to comprehend and deeply to ponder over true Christianity, it is difficult to suppose that the result will not be very different. Whether presented by a Roman or Anglo-Catholic or Genevese divine, by pope, bishop, or presbyter, there is nothing, one would suppose, very repugnant to the feelings of a Jew when he learns that the redemption of the human race has been effected by the mediatorial agency of a child of Israel: if the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation be developed to him, he will remember that the blood of Jacob is a chosen and peculiar blood; and if so transcendent a consummation is to occur, he will scarcely deny that only one race could be deemed worthy of accomplishing it. There may be points of doctrine on which the northern and western races may perhaps never agree. The Jew like them may follow that path in those respects which reason and feeling alike dictate; but nevertheless it can hardly be maintained that there is anything revolting to a Jew to learn that a Jewess is the queen of heaven, or that the flower of the Jewish race are even now sitting on the right hand of the Lord God of Sabaoth.

Perhaps, too, in this enlightened age, as his mind expands, and he takes a comprehensive view of this period of progress, the pupil of Moses may ask himself, whether all the princes of the house of David have done so much for the Jews as that prince who was crucified on Calvary. Had it not been for Him, the Jews would have been comparatively unknown, or known only as a high Oriental caste which had lost its country. Has not He made their history the most famous in the world? Has not He hung up their laws in every temple? Has not He vindicated all their wrongs? Has not He avenged the victory of Titus and conquered the Cæsars? What successes did they anticipate from their Messiah? The wildest dreams of their rabbis have been far exceeded. Has not Jesus conquered Europe and changed its name into Christendom? All countries that refuse the cross wither, while the whole of the new world is devoted to the Semitic principle and its most glorious offspring the Jewish faith, and the time will come when the vast communities and countless myriads of America and Australia, looking upon Europe as Europe now looks upon Greece, and wondering how so small a space could have achieved such great deeds, will still find music in the songs of Sion and still seek solace in the parables of Galilee.

These may be dreams, but there is one fact which none can contest. Christians may continue to persecute Jews, and Jews may persist in disbelieving Christians, but who can deny that Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of the Most High God, is the eternal glory of the Jewish race?

CHAPTER XI.

Jewish Disabilities.

T WOULD seem to follow from the views expressed in the preceding chapter, that in communities professing a belief in our Lord, the Jewish race ought not to be subject to any legislative dishonour or disqualification. These views, however, were not those which influenced Lord George Bentinck in forming his opinion that the civil disabilities of those subjects of her Majesty who profess that limited belief in divine revelation which is commonly called the Jewish religion should be removed. He had supported a measure to this effect in the year 1833, guided in that conduct by his devoted attachment to the equivocal principle of religious liberty, the unqualified application of which principle seems hardly consistent with that recognition of religious truth by the state to which we yet adhere, and without which it is highly probable that the northern and western races, after a disturbing and rapidly degrading period of atheistic anarchy, may fatally recur to their old national idolatries, modified and mythically dressed up according to the spirit of the age. It may be observed that the

decline and disasters of modern communities have generally been relative to their degree of sedition against the Semitic principle. Since the great revolt of the Celts against the first and second testament, at the close of the last century, France has been alternately in a state of collapse or convulsion. Throughout the awful trials of the last sixty years, England, notwithstanding her deficient and meagre theology, has always remembered Sion. The great Transatlantic republic is intensely Semitic, and has prospered accordingly. This sacred principle alone has consolidated the mighty empire of all the Russias. How omnipotent it is cannot be more clearly shown than by the instance of Rome, where it appears in its most corrupt form. An old man on a Semitic throne baffles the modern Attilas, and the recent invasion of the barbarians, under the form of red republicans, socialists, communists, all different phases which describe the relapse of the once converted races into their primitive condition of savagery. Austria would long ago have dissolved but for the Semitic principle, and if the north of Germany has never succeeded in attaining that imperial position which seemed its natural destiny, it is that the north of Germany has never at any time been thoroughly converted. Some perhaps may point to Spain as a remarkable instance of decline in a country where the Semitic principle has exercised great influence. But the fall of Spain was occasioned by the expulsion of her Semitic population: a million families of Jews and Saracens, the most distinguished of her citizens for their industry and their intelligence, their learning and their wealth.

It appears that Lord George Bentinck had offended some of his followers by an opinion expressed in his

address to his constituency in '47, that in accordance with the suggestion of Mr. Pitt, some provision should be made for the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland out of the land. Although this opinion might offend the religious sentiments of some, and might be justly looked upon by others as a scheme ill-suited to the character of an age adverse to any further religious endowments, it must be acknowledged that no member of the Protectionist party had any just cause of complaint against Lord George for the expression of an opinion which he had always upheld, and of his constancy to which he had fairly given his friends notice. This was so generally felt that the repining died away. The Jewish question, as it was called, revived these religious emotions. These feelings, as springing from the highest sentiment of our nature, and founded, however mistaken in their application, on religious truth, are entitled to deep respect and tenderness; but no one can indulge them by the compromise of the highest principles, or by sanctioning a course which he really believes to be destructive of the very object which their votaries wish to cherish.

As there are very few Englishmen of what is commonly called the Jewish faith, and as therefore it was supposed that political considerations could not enter into the question, it was hoped by many of the followers of Lord George Bentinck that he would not separate himself from his party on this subject, and very earnest requests and representations were made to him with that view. He was not insensible to them; he gave them prolonged and painful consideration; they greatly disquieted him. In his confidential correspondence he often recurs to the distress and

anxiety which this question and its consequences as regarded his position with those friends to whom he was much attached occasioned him. It must not, therefore, be supposed that, in the line he ultimately took with reference to this question, he was influenced, as some have unkindly and unwarrantably fancied, by a self-willed, inexorable, and imperious spirit. He was no doubt, by nature, a proud man, inclined even to arrogance, and naturally impatient of contradiction; but two severe campaigns in the House of Commons had already mitigated these characteristics: he understood human nature, he was fond of his party, and, irrespective of other considerations, it pained his ardent and generous heart to mortify his comrades. It was therefore not in any degree from temper, but from principle,—from as pure, as high, and as noble a sense of duty as ever actuated a man in public life,—that Lord George Bentinck ultimately resolved that it was impossible for him to refuse to vote for the removal of what are commonly called Jewish disabilities. He had voted in this particular cause shortly after his entrance into public life; it was in accordance with that general principle of religious liberty to which he was an uncompromising adherent; it was in complete agreement with the understanding which subsisted between himself and the Protectionist party, when at their urgent request he unwillingly assumed the helm. He was entreated not to vote at all; to stay away, which the severe indisposition under which he was then labouring warranted. He did not rudely repulse these latter representations, as has been circulated. On the contrary, he listened to them with kindness, and was not uninfluenced by them. Enfeebled by illness, he had

nearly brought himself to a compliance with a request urged with affectionate importunity, but from which his reason and sense of duty held him aloof. After long and deep and painful pondering, when the hour arrived, he rose from his bed of sickness, walked into the House of Commons, and not only voted, but spoke in favour of his convictions. His speech remains, one of the best ever delivered on the subject, not only full of weighty argument, but touched with a high and even tender vein of sentiment.

This vote and speech of Lord George Bentinck no doubt mortified at the moment a considerable portion of his followers, and occasioned great dissatisfaction among a very respectable though limited section of them. This latter body must either have forgotten or they must have been strangely unacquainted with the distinct understanding on which Lord George had undertaken the lead of the party, or otherwise they could not have felt authorized in conveying to him their keen sense of disapprobation. Unfortunately he received this when the House had adjourned for the holidays, and when Mr. Bankes, who had been the organ of communication with him in '46, was in the country, and when the party was of course generally dispersed. Lord George did not take any pains to ascertain whether the representation which was made to him was that of the general feeling of a large party, or that only of a sincere, highly estimable, but limited section. He was enfeebled and exhausted by indisposition; he often felt, even when in health, that the toil of his life was beyond both his physical and moral energies; and though he was of that ardent and tenacious nature that he never would have complained, but have died at his post, the opportunity of

release coming to him at a moment when he was physically prostrate was rather eagerly seized, and the world suddenly learnt at Christmas, with great astonishment, that the renowned leader of the Protectionist party had relinquished his trust.

The numerous communications which he received must have convinced him that the assumed circumstances under which he acted had not been accurately appreciated by him. He was implored to reconsider his course, as one very detrimental to the cause to which he was devoted, and which would probably tend to the triumph of those whose policy he had attempted to defeat, and whose personal conduct he had at least succeeded in punishing.

'The prophesied time has come,' he wrote to his friend Mr. Bankes, on the 23rd of December, 1847, 'when I have ceased to be able to serve the party, the great cause of Protection, or my country, by any longer retaining the commission bestowed on me in the spring of 1846. You will remember, however, that when unfeignedly and honestly, but in vain, trying to escape from being raised to a position which I foresaw I must fail to maintain with advantage to you or honour to myself, I at last gave my consent, I only did so on the express understanding that my advancement should be held to be merely a *pro tempore* appointment, waiting till the country should have the opportunity of sending to Parliament other men better fitted to lead the country gentlemen of England. I have recalled these circumstances to your mind with no other purpose than that the party may feel how entirely free they are, without even the suspicion of doing an injustice to me or of showing me in this any disrespect, to remodel their arrangements,

and to supersede my lieutenancy by the appointment of a superior and permanent commander.'

And again on Christmas-day, to the same gentleman, in reply to an acknowledgment of the preceding, he says, while thanking Mr. Bankes 'for his warm-hearted letter as very grateful to his feelings,'—'Confidentially I tell you, that far from feeling in the least annoyed, I shall feel greatly relieved by a restoration to privacy and freedom. I worked upon my spirit in '46 and '47; but I have learnt now that I have shaken my constitution to the foundation, and I seriously doubt my being able to work on much longer.'

He wrote on the 24th of December to one of his most intimate friends and warmest supporters, Mr. Christopher, the member for Lincolnshire, who had remonstrated with him as to his decision: 'It is not in my nature to retain a station one moment after I get a hint even that any portion of those who raised me to it are wearied of seeing me there. The old members of the party will all recollect how clearly I foresaw and foretold that I should be found a very inconvenient as well as a very inefficient leader, so soon as the great Protection battle was brought to a close. I predicted all that has since occurred; and no one more cordially agrees than I do in the wisdom of the present decision, the spirit I presume of which is that no great party or large body of men can be successfully, or to any good purpose, led except by a man who heart and soul sympathizes with them in all their feelings, partialities, and prejudices. Cold reason has a poor chance against such influences. There can be no *esprit de corps* and no zeal where there is not a union of prejudices as well as of com-

mercial opinions. The election of a leader united with the great body of the party in these respects, will tend greatly to reunite its scattered particles, even on those questions where I shall be able to give my aid with all my wonted zeal, which will not be the less spirited because it will be free and independent.'

At a later period, acknowledging an address signed by the great body of the Protectionist party, and presented to him by the present Earl Talbot, then a member of the House of Commons, Lord George wrote, 'The considerations which obliged me to surrender a post of honour which every independent and high-minded English gentleman has at all times prized above the highest rewards in the gift of the crown, "the leadership of the country gentlemen of England," will never influence me to swerve from any endeavours of which my poor abilities and bodily energies are capable in the promotion of the prosperity of all classes in the British empire at home and in the colonies, any more than they can ever make me forget the attachment, the friendship, and the enthusiastic support of those who stood by me to the end of the death struggle for British interests and for English good faith and political honour, and to whose continued friendship and constancy I know I am indebted for this graceful and grateful compliment.'

If Lord George Bentinck was inexorable to the entreaties of his friends, it must not be supposed that he was influenced in the course which he pursued, as was presumed by many at the time not acquainted with the circumstances, by any feeling of pique or brooding sullenness. No high-spirited man under vexatious and distressing circumstances ever behaved

with more magnanimity. In this he was actuated in a great degree by a sense of duty, but still more by that peculiar want of selfishness which was one of the most beautiful traits of his character. The moment he had at all recovered from the severe attack by which, to use his own language, he had been 'struck down in the first week of the session,' and from the effects of which it may be doubted whether he ever entirely recovered, he laboured zealously to induce some competent person to undertake the office which he had thought it expedient to resign, offering in several instances to serve in the ranks, and to assist with his utmost energies, both in and out of the House, the individual who would undertake the responsible direction in the Commons.

These efforts, though indefatigable, were not successful, for those who were competent to the office cared not to serve under any one except himself. About this time, a personage of great station, and who very much admired Lord George Bentinck, wrote to him, and recommended him not to trouble himself about the general discipline of the party, but to follow his own course, and lead that body of friends who under all circumstances would adhere to him, instancing the case of Mr. Canning, under circumstances not altogether dissimilar. Lord George replied: 'As for my rallying a personal party round myself, as Mr. Canning did, I have no pretension to anything of the kind; when Mr. Canning did that, the House of Commons, and England too, acknowledged him to be the greatest orator who had survived Pitt and Fox; he had been Secretary of State for foreign affairs, and had taken a conspicuous part in rousing the country to carry on the war against France.'

The nature of the subject, dealing as it necessarily does with so many personal details, renders it impossible to make public the correspondence in which Lord George Bentinck was engaged at this time in his attempts to place the Protectionist party under the guidance of one who would unite all sympathies; but were that publication possible, it would place Lord George Bentinck in a very noble and amiable light, and prove a gentleness and softness in his nature for which those who were not very intimate with him did not give him credit. Not that it must be for a moment supposed that he was insensible to what was occurring. He was the most sensitive as well as the proudest of men. When the writer called at Harcourt House, to bid him farewell, before the Christmas holidays, and, conversing very frankly on the course which he was then pursuing, inquired as to his future proceedings, Lord George said with emotion: 'In this cause I have shaken my constitution and shortened my days, and I will succeed or die.' In the course of the year 1848, walking home, talking together, from the House of Commons, he twice recurred to this terrible alternative.

But all considerations were merged at this moment in the predominant one which was to keep the party together. He wrote to a friend at the end of January, who urged him, as the hour of work approached and the injurious inconveniences of his abdication would be more felt, to confer with his former followers and reconsider his position, that no personal feeling prevented his taking that course, but that he felt any resumption of responsibility on his part would not be pleasing to a section of those who formerly served with him, and that there would be a 'split'

in the ranks. 'As far as I am personally concerned,' he added, 'I could submit to anything short of having my ears cut off and appearing as a "Croppy," to be free again. My pride cannot stand leading an unwilling party; I would just as soon thrust myself into a dinner-room where I was at once an uninvited and an unwelcome guest.'

In the meantime, according to his custom, the moment that he had sufficiently recovered from his illness, he prepared with the utmost zeal for the coming struggle respecting the fate of our sugar colonies, in which subject he was soon absorbed.

Parliament reassembled on the 3rd of February, and on that night Lord George Bentinck brought forward his motion for 'a select committee to inquire into the present condition and prospects of the interests connected with and dependent on sugar and coffee planting in her Majesty's East and West Indian possessions and the Mauritius, and to consider whether any and what measures can be adopted by Parliament for their relief.' When he entered the House, Lord George walked up to the head of the second bench below the gangway, on the opposition side, and thus significantly announced that he was no longer the responsible leader of the Protectionist party. It was the wish of the writer of these pages, who had resolved to stand or fall by him, to have followed his example and to have abdicated the prominent seat in which the writer had been unwillingly and fortuitously placed; but by the advice, or rather at the earnest request, of Lord George Bentinck, this course was relinquished as indicative of schism, which he wished to discourage; and the circumstance is only mentioned as showing that Lord George was not less considerate at this

moment of the interests of the Protectionist party than when he led them with so much confidence and authority. The session, however, was to commence without a leader, without any recognized organ of communication between parties, or any responsible representative of opinion in debate. All again was chaos. There is, however, something so vital in the Conservative party that it seems always to rally under every disadvantage.

Lord George spoke well to his resolution: the House soon recognized he was master of his case, and though few foresaw at the moment the important consequences to which this motion would lead, the House was interested from the first; and though there was no division, the debate lasted two days, and was sustained on both sides with great animation.

The mover vindicated himself very successfully for only proposing a committee of inquiry. 'It has been represented to me,' he said, 'by the colonies and by persons in this country who are interested in them, that the course which I am proposing is not consistent with the necessities of the case; that there is something pusillanimous in the motion which I am going to make; that in point of fact the interests connected with sugar and coffee planting are *in extremis;* and that while the question of their redress is being discussed in a committee above-stairs, these great interests will perish. They say to me that a committee of inquiry will be to them of the nature of that comfort which,

"Like cordials after death, come late;"

and that before the committee shall have reported, the West-Indian interest will be altogether past re-

covery. But, sir, it is for me to consider what my power is to obtain any substantial relief by a direct vote of this House; and when I remember that in July, 1846, I moved a resolution the purport of which was, to maintain the protection for the West-Indian and the East-Indian free-labour colonies which they now seek, and that I had but one hundred and thirty gentlemen to support me, while two hundred and sixty-five votes were recorded in favour of the measure of the Government admitting slave-labour sugar, I feel that it is hopeless for me to endeavour in this House, where I have no reason to suppose any addition has been made to the members acquiescing in my views, to convert that minority into a majority; and more especially when I recollect that on that occasion but five gentlemen connected with the West-Indian and East-Indian interests recorded their votes with me, I think the West-Indian interest has not a good case against me when they blame me for not taking a more resolute step on this occasion.'

He was not, however, without hope from the course which he had decided to pursue. 'Looking, as I have done, at the deplorable state of the West Indies, the East Indies, and the Mauritius, and holding, as I do, in my hand a list of forty-eight great houses in England—twenty-six of the first commercial houses in London, sixteen in Liverpool, and six elsewhere—which have failed, and whose liabilities amount in the whole to £6,300,000 and upwards, none of which I believe would have fallen had it not been for the ruin brought upon them by the change in the sugar duties and the consequent reduction in the price of their produce,—I do hope, through the intervention of a committee of this House, I may be

able to prevail upon the House to change its policy with regard to this great question.'

Lord George was supported in this debate by Mr. Thomas Baring, in one of the best speeches ever made in the House of Commons. Few more combine mastery of the case with parliamentary point than this gentleman. It is not impossible to find a man capable of addressing the House of Commons who understands the subject; it is not impossible to find a man who can convey his impressions on any subject to the House in a lively and captivating manner, though both instances are rarer than the world would imagine; but a man who at the same time understands a question and can handle it before a popular assembly in a popular style, who teaches without being pedantic, can convey an argument in an epigram, and instruct as the Mexicans did by picture, possesses a talent for the exercise of which he is responsible to his sovereign and his country.

Mr. Baring said that he could not perfectly agree either with Lord John Russell or Lord George Bentinck, that Protection or Free Trade must be in what they called a circle, round which in their legislation they must always move; that they must either give protection to everything or free trade to everything. He could not say that because sugar claimed protection, coals must have protection also. Neither would he, on the other hand, apply free trade to every article. He acknowledged the advantage of competition as a stimulus: he thought that, placing things on equal grounds, competition was undoubtedly a great advantage. He could understand a competition to try the mutual speed of race-horses; but there could be no competition between a race-horse and a steam-

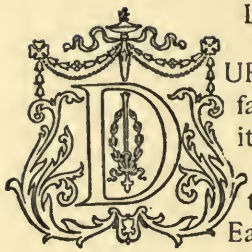
engine, for the power of the animal could bear no comparison with that of the machine!

Mr. Baring could look back to no legislation more humiliating than the legislation regarding our colonies. No great interest was ever so much trifled with, so much sacrificed to the cry of the day; at one moment to no slavery and another to cheap sugar.

The committee was granted, and it was generally felt that the question was consequently quieted for the session.

CHAPTER XII.

Leader Perforce.



URING the first six weeks of this famous committee the attendance of its members was not very regular, and its labours attracted little attention. The evidence on the East-India part of the question was closed and reported to the House by the end of February; after that period the evidence was reported to the House every week or ten days. Towards the end of March, rumours began to circulate of the extraordinary vigour and ability with which this investigation was pursued, and of the novel, authentic, and striking evidence that had been elicited. The proceedings were talked of in the House of Commons and on the Royal Exchange; the City men who were examined went back to their companions with wondrous tales of the energy and acuteness of Harcourt House, and the order, method, and discipline of the committee-room at Westminster. As time elapsed, the hopes of the colonial interest again revived. It was generally felt that Lord George had succeeded in establishing an irresistible case. It was rumoured that

the government could not withstand it. Those who had originally murmured at the course which he had adopted of moving for a committee of inquiry, instead of proposing a specific measure of relief, and had treated an investigation as a mere means of securing inaction, now recanted their rash criticism, and did justice to his prescience and superior judgment, as well as to his vast information and indefatigable exertions. The week during which the committee sat on their report was a very anxious one; the divisions were known every day in the House of Commons; the alternations of success and discomfiture, and the balanced numbers that so often called for the interposition of the chairman, were calculated to sustain the excitement; and when, on the 29th of May, it was known that the report was at length agreed to, and that a committee of free traders had absolutely recommended a differential duty of 10*s.* in favour of our own produce, one might have fancied from the effect visibly produced, that a government was changed.

A few days before—it was the day after the Derby, May 25th—the writer met Lord George Bentinck in the library of the House of Commons. He was standing before the book-shelves, with a volume in his hand, and his countenance was greatly disturbed. His resolutions in favour of the colonial interest after all his labours had been negatived by the committee on the 22nd, and on the 24th, his horse Surplice, whom he had parted with among the rest of his stud, solely that he might pursue without distraction his labours on behalf of the great interests of the country, had won that paramount and Olympian stake, to gain which had been the object of his life. He had nothing to console him, and nothing to

sustain him except his pride. Even that deserted him before a heart which he knew at least could yield him sympathy. He gave a sort of superb groan:—

'All my life I have been trying for this, and for what have I sacrificed it!' he murmured.

It was in vain to offer solace.

'You do not know what the Derby is,' he moaned out.

'Yes, I do; it is the blue ribbon of the turf.'

'It is the blue ribbon of the turf,' he slowly repeated to himself, and sitting down at the table, he buried himself in a folio of statistics.

But on Monday, the 29th, when the resolution in favour of a 10*s.* differential duty for the colonies had at the last moment been carried, and carried by his casting vote, 'the blue ribbons of the turf' were all forgotten. Not for all the honours and successes of all the meetings, spring or autumn, Newmarket, Epsom, Goodwood, Doncaster, would he have exchanged that hour of rapture. His eye sparkled with fire, his nostril dilated with triumph, his brow was elate like a conqueror, his sanguine spirit saw a future of continued and illimitable success.

'We have saved the colonies,' he said,—'saved the colonies. I knew it must be so. It is the knell of free trade.'

Notwithstanding the formal renunciation of the leadership of the Protectionist party by Lord George Bentinck, it was soon evident to the House and the country that that renunciation was merely formal. In these days of labour, the leader of a party must be the man who does the work, and that work cannot now be accomplished without the devotion of a life. Whenever a great question arose, the people out of

doors went to Lord George Bentinck, and when the discussion commenced, he was always found to be the man armed with the authority of knowledge. There was, however, no organized debate and no party discipline. No one was requested to take a part, and no attendance was ever summoned. The vast majority sitting on the Protectionist benches always followed Bentinck, who, whatever might be his numbers in the lobby, always made a redoubtable stand in the House. The situation however, it cannot be denied, was a dangerous one for a great party to persevere in, but no permanent damage accrued, because almost every one hoped that before the session was over, the difficulty would find a natural solution in the virtual chief resuming his formal and responsible post. Notwithstanding his labours on the two great committees of the year—those on colonial and commercial distress,—Lord George Bentinck found time to master the case of the shipping interest when the navigation laws were attacked, to impugn in a formal motion the whole of the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel, even while the sugar and coffee planting committee was still sitting, and to produce, early in March, a rival budget. It was mainly through the prolonged resistance which he organized against the repeal of the navigation laws, that the government, in 1848, was forced to abandon their project. The resistance was led with great ability by Mr. Herries, and the whole party put forward their utmost strength to support him. But it is very difficult to convey a complete picture of the laborious life of Lord George Bentinck during the sitting of Parliament. At half-past nine o'clock there called upon him the commercial representatives of the question of

the day; after these conferences came his elaborate and methodical correspondence, all of which he carried on himself in a handwriting clear as print, and never employing a secretary; at twelve or one o'clock he was at a committee, and he only left the committee-room to take his seat in the House of Commons, which he never quitted till the House adjourned, always long past midnight, and often at two o'clock in the morning. Here he was ready for all comers, never omitting an opportunity to vindicate his opinions, or watching with lynx-like vigilance the conduct of a public office. What was not his least remarkable trait is, that although he only breakfasted on dry toast, he took no sustenance all this time, dining at White's at half-past two o'clock in the morning. After his severe attack of the influenza he broke through this habit a little during the last few months of his life, moved by the advice of his physician and the instance of his friends. The writer of these observations prevailed upon him a little the last year to fall into the easy habit of dining at Bellamy's, which saves much time, and permits the transaction of business in conversation with a congenial friend. But he grudged it: he always thought that something would be said or done in his absence, which would not have occurred had he been there; some motion whisked through, or some return altered. His principle was that a member should never be absent from his seat.

The session of '48 had been one of unexampled length, having lasted ten months, and, as usual under such circumstances, the obstacles to the transaction of public business were sought everywhere except in the real quarter. The forms of the House and the

propensity to unnecessary discussion among its members were chiefly denounced. Lord George Bentinck did not agree in the justness of these criminations; they were eagerly caught by the thoughtless and the superficial, but it was his habit to investigate and analyze everything, and he found that these charges had no basis. The forms of the House of Commons are the result of accumulated experience and have rarely been tampered with successfully, while on the other hand a parliamentary government is by name and nature essentially a goverment of discussion. It is not at all difficult to conceive a mode of governing a country more expeditious than by a parliament; but where truth as well as strength is held to be an essential element of legislation, opinion must be secured an unrestricted organ. Superfluity of debate may often be inconvenient to a minister, and sometimes perhaps even distasteful to the community; but criticizing such a security for justice and liberty as a free-spoken parliament is like quarrelling with the weather because there is too much rain or too much sunshine. The casual inconvenience should be forgotten in the permanent blessing. Acting upon these false imputations a committee was even appointed, two years ago, of the most eminent members of the House of Commons, to investigate the subject and suggest remedies, and some votaries of the Transatlantic type recommended the adoption of the rules of Congress where each speaker is limited to an hour. But an hour from an uninteresting speaker would be a great infliction. The good sense and the good taste of the House of Commons will be found on the whole to be the best regulators of the duration of a debate.

The truth is that the delay in the conduct of parliamentary business which has been much complained of during the last few years, murmurs of which were especially rife in 1848, is attributable to the fact that the ministry, though formed of men inferior in point of ability to none who could be reasonably intrusted with administration, had not sufficient parliamentary strength. After all their deliberations and foresight,—after all their observations of the times and study of the public interest, their measures when launched from the cabinet into the House were not received by a confiding majority, firm in their faith in the statesmanlike qualities of the authors of these measures and in their sympathy with the general political system of which the ministry was the representative. On the contrary, the success of the measures depended on a variety of sections who in their aggregate exceeded in number and influence the party of the ministers. These became critics and took the ministerial measures in hand; the measures became, the measures, not of the cabinet, but of the House of Commons; and a purely legislative assembly became, in consequence of the weakness of the government, yearly more administrative. This was undoubtedly a great evil, and occasioned, besides great delay, many crude enactments, as will be the case where all are constructors and none are responsible, but the evil was not occasioned by the forms of the House or the length of the speeches. Sir Robert Peel was unquestionably a very able administrator, but if he had not had a majority of ninety he would have fallen in as ill repute as has been too often the lot of Lord John Russell.

Lord George Bentinck was very anxious that there should be a parliamentary summary of this enormous

and eventful session of '48, that the conduct of business by the ministry should be traced and criticized and the character of the House of Commons vindicated, and he appealed to the writer of these observations to undertake the task. But the writer was unwilling to accede to this suggestion, not only because at the end of August he shrank from a laborious effort, but principally because he did not hold that his position in the House of Commons warranted on his part such an interference, since, after all, he was only the comrade in arms of one who chose to be only an independent member of the House. He therefore unaffectedly stated that he thought the office was somewhat above his measure. But Lord George Bentinck would not listen to these representations. 'I don't pretend to know much,' he said, 'but I can judge of men and horses.' It is difficult to refuse those who are themselves setting a constant example of self-sacrifice, and therefore, so far as the labour was concerned, the writer would not have shrunk from the exertion even on the last day of the month of August, and when the particular wish of Lord George was found to be more general than the writer presumed to suppose, he accordingly endeavoured to accomplish the intention.

Three or four days after this, the writer, about to leave London, called at Harcourt House, to say farewell to his comrade in arms. He passed with Lord George the whole morning, rather indulging in the contemplation of the future than in retrospect. Lord George was serene, cheerful, and happy. He was content with himself, which was rarely the case, and remembered nothing of his career but its distinction, and the ennobling sense of having done his duty.

Any misunderstandings that may have for a moment irritated him seemed forgotten; he appeared conscious that he possessed the confidence and cordial regard of the great majority of the Protectionist party, although he chose to occupy a private post, and he was proud of the consciousness. He was still more sensible of the sympathy which he had created out of doors, which he greatly appreciated, and to which, though with his usual modesty, he more than once recurred. 'The thing is to get the people out of doors with you,' he repeated, 'men like the merchants; all the rest follow.' It was evident that the success of his colonial committee had greatly satisfied his spirit. He had received that day the vote of thanks of the West-India body for his exertions. He said more than once, that with a weak government, a parliamentary committee properly worked might do wonders. He said he would have a committee on import duties next year, and have all the merchants to show what share the foreigners had obtained of the reductions that had been made of late years. He maintained, that, quite irrespective of the general arrangements of the new commercial system, Sir Robert Peel had thrown away a great revenue on a number of articles of very inferior importance, and he would prove this to the country. He said our colonial empire ought to be reconstructed by a total abolition of all duties on produce from her Majesty's dominions abroad.

All his ideas were large, clear, and coherent. He dwelt much on the vicissitudes which most attend all merely foreign trade, which, though it should be encouraged, ought not to be solely relied on, as was the fashion of this day. Looking upon war as occasionally inevitable, he thought a commercial system based

upon the presumption of perpetual peace to be full of ruin. His policy was essentially imperial and not cosmopolitan.

About to part probably for many months, and listening to him as he spoke, according to his custom, with so much fervour and sincerity, one could not refrain from musing over his singular and sudden career. It was not three years since he had in an instant occupied the minds of men. No series of parliamentary labours had ever produced so much influence in the country in so short a time. Never was a reputation so substantial built up in so brief a period. All the questions with which he had dealt were colossal questions: the laws that should regulate competition between native and foreign labour; the interference of the state in the development of the resources of Ireland; the social and commercial condition of our tropical colonies; the principles upon which our revenue should be raised; the laws which should regulate and protect our navigation. But it was not that he merely expressed opinions upon these subjects; he came forward with details in support of his principles and policy, which it had before been believed none but a minister could command. Instead of experiencing the usual and almost inevitable doom of private members of Parliament, and having his statements shattered by official information, Lord George Bentinck on the contrary, was the assailant, and the successful assailant, of an administration on these very heads. He often did their work more effectually than all their artificial training enabled them to do it. His acute research, and his peculiar sources of information, roused the vigilance of all the public offices of the country. Since his time, there has been more care

in preparing official returns, and in arranging the public correspondence placed on the table of the House of Commons.

When one remembered that in this room, not three years ago, he was trying to find a lawyer who would make a speech for him in Parliament, it was curious to remember that no one in the period had probably addressed the House of Commons oftener. Though his manner, which was daily improving, was not felicitous in the House, the authority of his intellect, his knowledge, and his character, made him one of the great personages of debate; but with the country who only read his speeches he ranked high as an orator. It is only those who have had occasion critically to read and examine the long series of his speeches who can be conscious of their considerable merits. The information is always full and often fresh, the scope large, the argument close, and the style, though simple, never bald, but vigorous, idiomatic, and often picturesque. He had not credit for this in his day, but the passages which have been quoted in this sketch will prove the justness of this criticism. As a speaker and writer, his principal need was condensation. He could not bear that anything should remain untold. He was deficient in taste, but he had fervour of feeling, and was by no means void of imagination.

The writer, in his frequent communications with him of faithful and unbounded confidence, was often reminded of the character by Mr. Burke of my Lord Keppell.

The labours of Lord George Bentinck had been supernatural, and one ought perhaps to have felt then that it was impossible they could be continued on

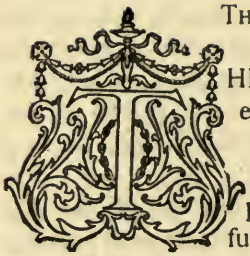
such a scale of exhaustion; but no friend could control his eager life in this respect; he obeyed the law of his vehement and fiery nature, being one of those men who in whatever they undertake know no medium, but will 'succeed or die.'

But why talk here and now of death! He goes to his native county and his father's proud domain, to breathe the air of his boyhood and move amid the parks and meads of his youth. Every breeze will bear health, and the sight of every hallowed haunt will stimulate his pulse. He is scarcely older than Julius Cæsar when he commenced his public career, he looks as high and brave, and he springs from a long-lived race.

He stood upon the *perron* of Harcourt House, the last of the great hotels of an age of stately dwellings with its wings, and court-yard, and carriage portal, and huge outward walls. He put forth his hand to bid farewell, and his last words were characteristic of the man — of his warm feelings and of his ruling passion: 'God bless you; we must work, and the country will come round us.'

CHAPTER XIII.

The Curtain Falls.



HE heavens darken; a new character enters upon the scene.

They say that when great men arise they have a mission to accomplish and do not disappear until it is fulfilled. Yet this is not always true. After all his deep study and his daring action Mr. Hampden died on an obscure field, almost before the commencement of that mighty struggle which he seemed born to direct. In the great contention between the patriotic and the cosmopolitan principle which has hardly begun, and on the issue of which the fate of this island as a powerful community depends, Lord George Bentinck appeared to be produced to represent the traditionary influences of our country in their most captivating form. Born a natural leader of the people, he was equal to the post. Free from prejudices, his large mind sympathized with all classes of the realm. His courage and his constancy were never surpassed by man. He valued life only as a means of fulfilling duty, and truly it may be said of him, that he feared none but God.

A few days after the interview noticed in the last chapter, Lord George Bentinck returned to Welbeck. Some there were who thought him worn by the exertions of the session, and that an unusual pallor had settled upon that mantling and animated countenance. He himself never felt in better health or was ever in higher spirits, and greatly enjoyed the change of life, and that change to a scene so dear to him.

On the 21st of September, after breakfasting with his family, he retired to his room, where he employed himself with some papers, and then wrote three letters, one to Lord Enfield, another to the Duke of Richmond, and the third to the writer of these pages. That letter is now at hand; it is of considerable length, consisting of seven sheets of note-paper, full of interesting details of men and things, and written not only in a cheerful but even a merry mood. Then, when his letters were sealed, about four o'clock he took his staff and went forth to walk to Thoresby, the seat of Lord Manvers, distant between five and six miles from Welbeck, where Lord George was to make a visit of two days. In consequence of this his valet drove over to Thoresby at the same time to meet his master. But the master never came. Hours passed on and the master never came. At length the anxious servant returned to Welbeck, and called up the groom who had driven him over to Thoresby and who was in bed, and inquired whether he had seen anything of Lord George on the way back, as his lord had never reached Thoresby. The groom got up, and accompanied by the valet and two others took lanthorns, and followed the footpath which they

had seen Lord George pursuing as they themselves went to Thoresby.

About a mile from the Abbey, on the path which they had observed him following, lying close to the gate which separates a water meadow from the deer-park, they found the body of Lord George Bentinck. He was lying on his face; his arms were under his body, and in one hand he grasped his walking-stick. His hat was a yard or two before him, having evidently been thrown off in falling. The body was cold and stiff. He had been long dead.

A woodman and some peasants passing near the spot, about two hundred yards from the gate in question, had observed Lord George, whom at the distance they had mistaken for his brother the Marquis of Titchfield, leaning against this gate. It was then about half-past four o'clock, or it might be a quarter to five, so he could not have left his home much more than half an hour. The woodman and his companions thought 'the gentleman' was reading, as he held his head down. One of them lingered for a minute looking at the gentleman, who then turned round, and might have seen these passers-by, but he made no sign to them.

Thus it seems that the attack, which was supposed to be a spasm of the heart, was not instantaneous in its effects, but with proper remedies might have been baffled. Terrible to think of him in his death-struggle without aid, and so near a devoted hearth! For that hearth, too, what an impending future!

The terrible news reached Nottingham on the

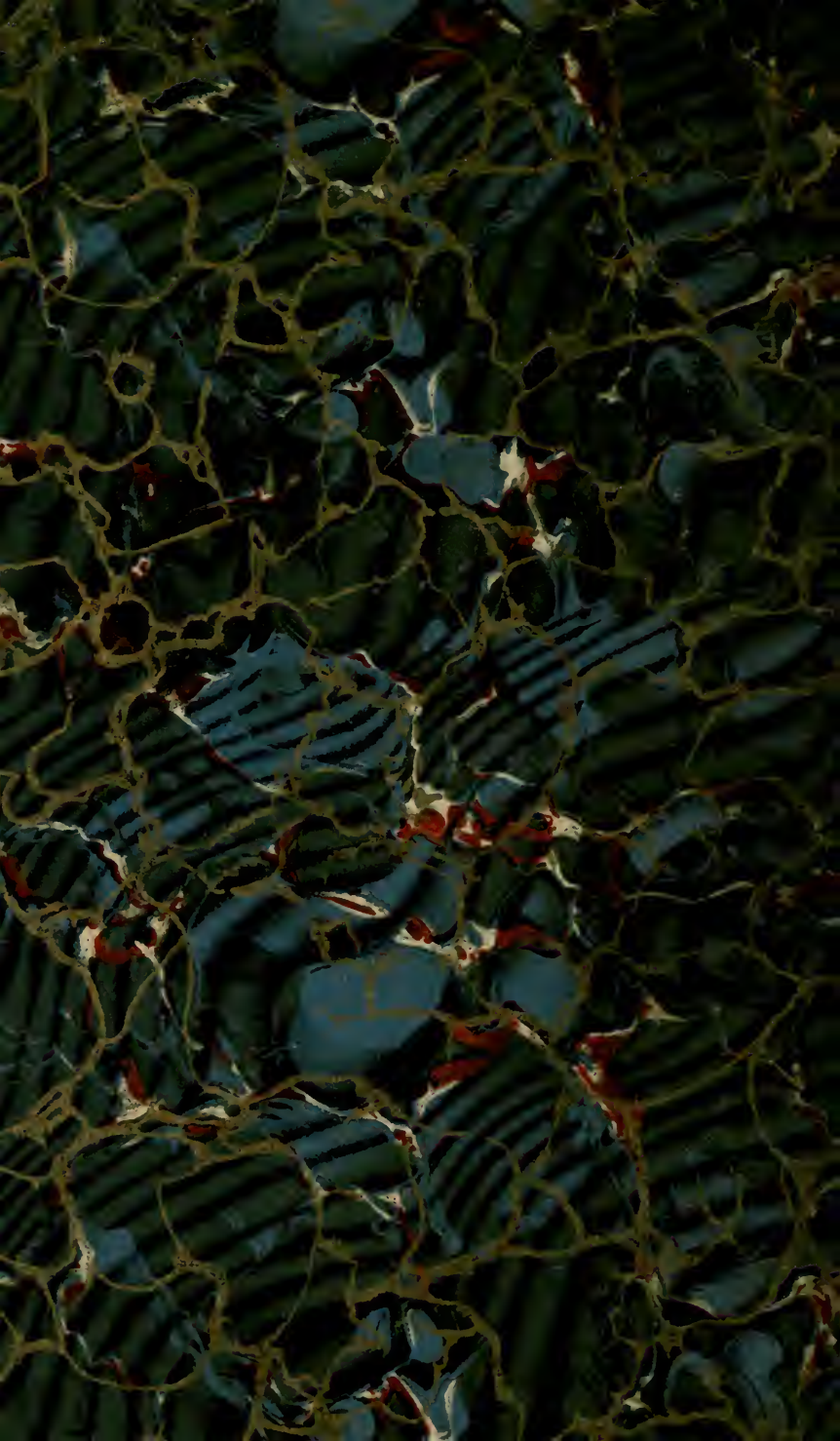
morning of the 22nd, at half-past nine o'clock, and, immediately telegraphed to London, was announced by a second edition of the 'Times' to the country. Consternation and deep grief fell upon all men. One week later, the remains arrived from Welbeck at Harcourt House, to be entombed in the family vault of the Bentincks, that is to be found in a small building in a dingy street, now a chapel of ease, but in old days the parish church among the fields of the pretty village of Marylebone.

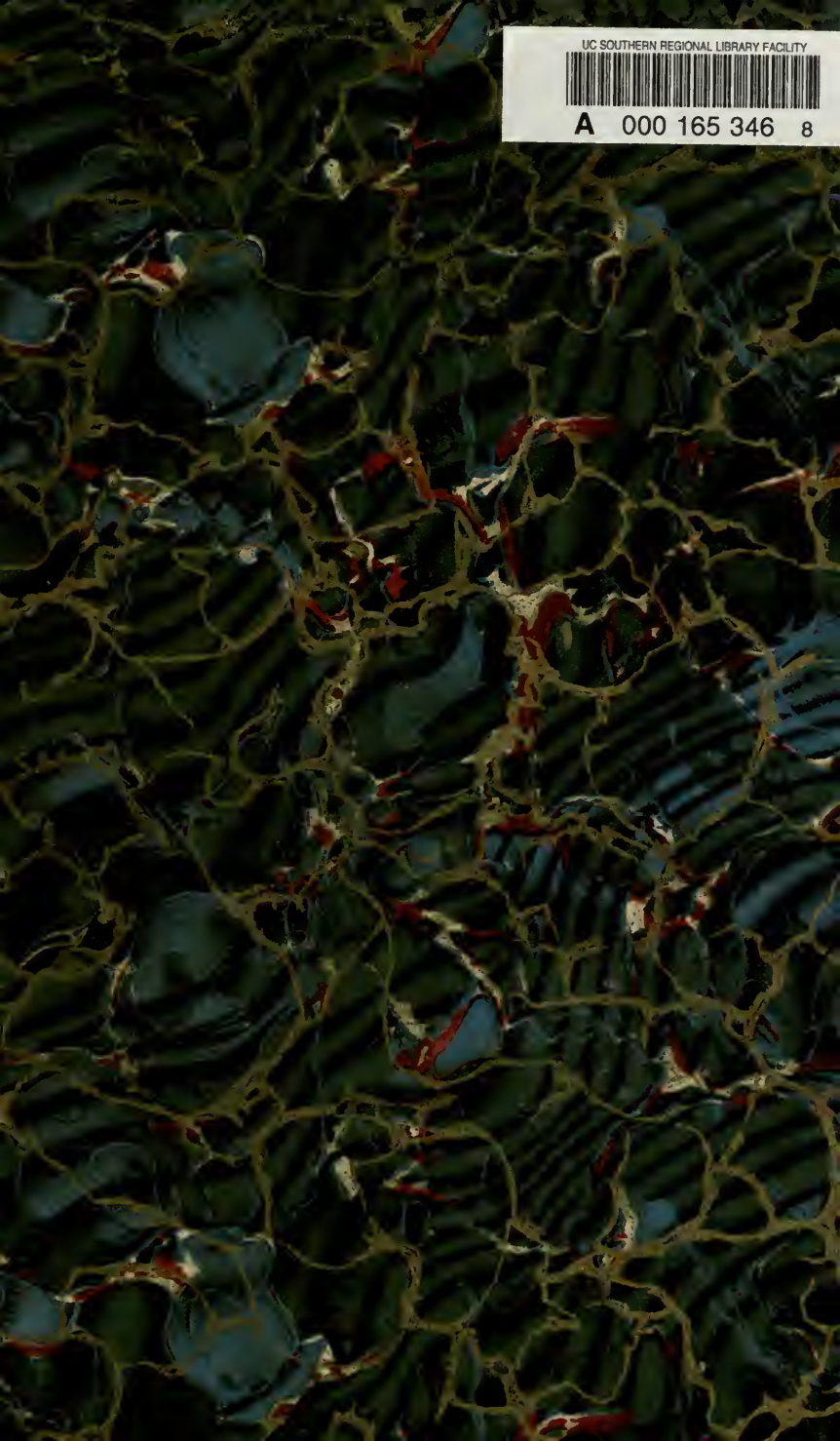
The day of interment was dark, and cold, and drizzling. Although the last offices were performed in the most scrupulously private manner, the feelings of the community could not be repressed. From nine till eleven o'clock that day all the British shipping in the docks and the river, from London Bridge to Gravesend, hoisted their flags half-mast high, and minute guns were fired from appointed stations along the Thames. The same mournful ceremony was observed in all the ports of England and Ireland; and not only in these, for the flag was half-mast high on every British ship at Antwerp, at Rotterdam, and at Havre.

Ere the last minute gun sounded, all was over. Followed to his tomb by those brothers who, if not consoled, might at this moment be sustained by the remembrance that to him they had ever been brothers not only in name but in spirit, the vault at length closed on the mortal remains of GEORGE BENTINCK.

One who stood by his side in an arduous and unequal struggle, who often shared his councils and sometimes perhaps soothed his cares, who knew well

the greatness of his nature and esteemed his friendship among the chief of worldly blessings, has stepped aside from the strife and passion of public life to draw up this record of his deeds and thoughts, that those who come after us may form some conception of his character and career, and trace in these faithful though imperfect pages the portraiture of an ENGLISH WORTHY.

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